

Pursuing Maturity

Walking with God 201

Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201

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Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201
Hour 1

Theology of Scripture
Walking by the Word of God

Class Notes

Inspiration of the Word of God

2 Timothy 3.16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

The Bible is inspired by God. The Greek word translated “inspired” is *theopneustos*, which literally means, “God _____ out.”

2 Peter 1.20-21 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Henry Thiessen explains the roles of God and man in the writing of the Bible: “The Holy Spirit so guided and superintended the writers of the sacred text, making use of their own unique personalities, that they wrote all that He wanted them to write, without excess or error,” (Thiessen, 65).

An implication of the doctrine of inspiration is that it causes the Bible to have ultimate authority. Wayne Grudem: “The authority of Scripture means that all the words in

Scripture are God’s words in such a way that to _____ or disobey any

word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey _____,” (Grudem, 73).

Inerrancy of the Bible

The Bible in its _____ form is inspired by God and completely without error.

Personal _____ and _____ of God’s Word

_____ Scripture enables us to think about the Word throughout the day.

The Sufficiency of God's Word

Hebrews 4.15-16 gives us great _____ for _____

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

2 Timothy 3.17 So that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

The fact that the Bible is _____ to prepare us for all events of life should motivate us to _____ with energy and desire.

Obedience to God's Word

John 14.21: "He who has My commandments and _____ them, he it is who _____ Me,"

Luke 6.46: "And why do you call Me, "Lord, Lord," and do not _____ what I say?"

James 1.22, 25 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely _____

who _____ themselves. ...But one who looks _____ at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a

forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be _____ in what he does.

Pastor Dale Whitehead, "Stop _____ yourself."

John MacArthur demonstrates the connection between obeying the Word and dealing successfully with life's problems:

There is no substitute for submission to Scripture. Your spiritual health depends on placing the utmost value on the Word of God and obeying it with an eager heart. Don't relinquish the sweet, satisfying riches of God's Word, (MacArthur 90).

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Hour 1

Theology of Scripture
Walking by the Word of God

Inspiration of the Word of God

2 Timothy 3.16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

The Bible is inspired by God. This is documented in 2 Timothy 3.16. The Greek word translated “inspired” is *theopneustos*, which literally means, “God breathed out.” This term indicates that the written Word of God comes from the depth of His being. “All,” shows that the truth of 2 Timothy 3.16 applies to every verse of Scripture.

2 Peter 1.20-21 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

The original writings of Scripture were caused by the will of the eternal God. The writing of the Bible was never “made by an act of human will,” according to 2 Peter 1.20-21. Rather, men were “moved by the Holy Spirit.” The actual verses of the Word of God are not “a matter of one’s own interpretation.” So, the men God used to write the Scriptures were not interpreting the ideas or words they inscribed. Henry Thiessen explains the roles of God and man in the writing of the Bible: “The Holy Spirit so guided and superintended the writers of the sacred text, making use of their own unique personalities, that they wrote all that He wanted them to write, without excess or error,” (Thiessen, 65). The initiating thoughts and purposes behind the Holy writings did not come from men but from God.

The theological doctrine of inspiration is defined, “God superintended the human authors of the Bible so that they composed and recorded without error His message to mankind in the words of their original writings,” (Ryrie, 81). God incorporated the personality, ministry and writing style of each human writer of the Scriptures. However, both the content as a whole and each individual word were chosen by the Lord.

An implication of the doctrine of inspiration is that it causes the Bible to have ultimate authority over all people. The authority of the God’s Word is due to the authority of God. The Bible is His chosen means of communicating sufficient truth for

“emergent church” movement teach that there is no absolute truth, but rather each person finds God through a unique personal journey. Those who believe the Bible is not completely without error open the door to foolish questions such as “Which parts are true?” and “How can we know what is true about God?” Paul Enns puts the matter in perspective, “To suggest there are errors in the Bible is to impugn the character of God. If the Bible has errors it is the same as suggesting that God can fail, that He can make a mistake,” (Enns, Page 167). The matter of inerrancy is vital to accurate teaching of the Gospel and theology.

The clear biblical doctrines of inspiration and inerrancy produce sure confidence in the reliability of the Scriptures. Knowing that the Bible is trustworthy is vital to the faith of those who believe in the Gospel. No other verification is necessary for the doctrines of the Bible. These beliefs are secure because God’s Word is without error.

Inerrancy shows the Scriptures to be the source of authoritative truth for all matters it discusses. The biblical doctrines of theology that define God, man and salvation rest on the trustworthiness of the Word of God. The Scriptures also address every other issue of life for which direction is needed (2 Timothy 3.17). These include communication, marriage, parenting, overcoming sin, depression, anxiety, money and self-control.

Christians should respond to the inerrant Bible by seeking to know its truths and to live in obedience to them. One might pray, “I believe Your Word is completely true. It is the one book I can trust. I will expend whatever time and energy are required to understand enough of Your truth so that I can actually live by it.” Could you honestly say that to God right now?

Personal Study and Application of God’s Word

1 Peter 2.1-3

Therefore, putting aside all malice and deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

Personal study of the Scriptures and living out the truths of the Word are nourishment for the soul. Peter compares these to a newborn baby needing mother’s milk. Similarly, the Word is all we need. Indeed, if we are fed by it every day we will be strong and healthy Christians.

There are many hindrances to quality time in the Word. They include the belief that you already know so much that you don’t need to study. Some think that they are too busy. The incorrect idea that it is too hard to study or understand the Word can

prevent fellowship with the Lord. Do you have the practice of reading to finish a required task but don't really hear or obey the Word? Some are content as they are, so they don't seek to grow in sanctification. Others allow feelings to determine whether or not they spend time with God. For many, their own sins are the deterrent to interaction with God through the Word. Each of these "reasons" to not spend regular extended quality time in the Word is like a newborn baby refusing to drink milk. Without the "pure milk of the Word," healthy growth will not be possible.

The Bible does not prescribe a specific time for your own Bible study or that it even must occur every day. But what the Word does say about the vital nature of regular extensive time demands that we make it the top priority on our schedules.

What are the essential components of personal study of the Scriptures?

Passion	Psalm 119.2	How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart.
	Psalm 119.47	I shall delight in Your commandments, Which I love.
Realize Your Sin	2 Timothy 3.16-17	All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
Grow in Holiness	1 Peter 2.1-3	Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.
Hear God's Truth	Hebrews 4.12-13	For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.
Commitment to Obey	Psalm 119.4	You have ordained Your precepts, That we should keep <i>them</i> diligently.
	Psalm 119.56	This has become mine, That I observe Your precepts
Hope	Psalm 119.50	This is my comfort in my affliction, That Your word has revived me.
	Psalm 119.143	Trouble and anguish have come upon me, <i>Yet</i> Your commandments are my delight.

There are many formats for effective Bible study. Choose one that facilitates the six factors listed above. At the end of this section is a reproducible page that has been helpful for many in studying the New Testament.

We study the Word so that we can live by it. God blesses doers of the Word, not those who hear and do not obey (James 1.22-25). The effective application of the Word is part of studying the Scriptures. The Word of God can equip us for every good work (2 Timothy 3.17). That means that it provides answers on relationships with people, work, anger, resolving conflicts, fear, reconciliation, facing death, hope and every other issue in

life. Valleybible.net / biblical counseling ministry contains many helpful studies from the Scriptures on specific life issues.

Our primary study should focus on the Word itself. We can benefit from accurate writings about the Word, teachings connected to the Word and discussions of theology. However, only the Scriptures carry the dimension of God-activated involvement with us at the level of motives.

Memorization

Psalm 119.11 Your word I have treasured in my heart,
That I may not sin against You.

Psalm 1.2-3 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in its season
And its leaf does not wither;
And in whatever he does, he prospers.

Each of these passages endorses the memorization of God's Word. Memorizing Scripture enables us to think about the Word at various times throughout the day. That can result in viewing the events of life accurately, being convicted by the Word, and stronger ability to overcome temptations. Knowing the promises of God's Word can reduce fear, worry and anxiety.

The Sufficiency of the Scriptures

What does the term "sufficiency of the Scriptures" really mean? How are the Scriptures sufficient? What needs do they fulfill?

Hebrews 4.12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than
any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of
soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge
the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

First, the Scriptures are sufficient to give us the ability to change. We need to change by replacing sin with righteousness (Ephesians 4.22-24). There is great intimacy between the believer and the Almighty God that only occurs through study of the Word. God is faithful to cause the Word to be living and active, communicating at a level no one else could---the thoughts and intentions of the inner person (Hebrews 4.12). This opens

the door to change at the heart level by repenting of the sins and motives He discloses to us (Proverbs 28.13, Revelation 3.19). The results of such interaction are spiritual growth, stronger faith, joy and closer companionship with God. Are these four things part of your life today?

Hebrews 4.15-16

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Secondly, Hebrews 4.15-16 gives us great hope for change. Jesus Christ was tempted in all things, yet did not sin. So, in Him we can overcome sin. The passage also instructs us to ask confidently for the two things we need for this change from sin to righteousness: mercy (God's response to our repentance: restoring us in our relationship with Him) and grace to help in this time of need (His own assistance to enable us to lay aside sin and put obedience to the Word in its place).

2 Timothy 3.17

So that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

A third aspect of the sufficiency of the Bible is that it causes Christians to be "adequate, equipped for every good work." This benefit of the sufficiency of the Word of God brings great hope to the believer. Wayne Grudem observes, "The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contained all the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting Him perfectly, and for obeying Him perfectly," (Grudem 127). This statement shows that the Word is complete in describing the Gospel and is also adequate to equip us for trusting and obeying God in every circumstance we will ever face. The Christian's confidence should rest on the adequate Word, not on self. This truth explains why believers are never tempted beyond what they are able (1 Corinthians 10.13). The fact that the Bible is enough to prepare us for all events of life should motivate us to thorough study.

Psalms 119.98-100

Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies,
For they are ever mine.
I have more insight than all my teachers,
For Your testimonies are my meditation.
I understand more than the aged,
Because I have observed Your precepts.

Fourthly, the Word is sufficient to make you wise. This wisdom exceeds that of enemies, teachers and even the aged (Psalm 119.98-100). Does this mean that all Bible students get good grades at school? What kind of wisdom do the Scriptures give? James 3.18 explains, "The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable,

full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering and without hypocrisy.” The wisdom yielded by the sufficient Scriptures produces obedience to God from a pure and gentle heart.

Matthew 7.24-27

Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and *yet* it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.

Finally, the Word of God is sufficient to enable you to stand up against every storm of life. Jesus said that in this world you will tribulation (John 16.33). Adversity, betrayal, loss, failure, physical pain or persecution will crash against your soul. The promise of Matthew 7.24-27 is that if you hear and obey the Word of God, you will be standing strong in the Lord at the end of each storm. Strengthened by enduring the hardship through the sufficient Word of God, the adversity results in greater faith. The fate of those who do not build their lives on hearing and obeying the Scriptures is great loss; their lives must be rebuilt.

God has given you the great gift of His sufficient Word. Commit yourself to detailed study of it. Measure your time in the Word by two things: how much you hear and how much you grow in obeying it.

Obedience to God's Word

Obeying God's Word is a vital part of discipleship. The Scriptures teach that obedience to God is connected to loving God. How do you know if you love God? Is it a feeling? Is it based on church attendance? Jesus said, “He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me,” John 14.21. 1 John 5.3 agrees, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.” Jesus put it another way, “And why do you call Me, “Lord, Lord,” and do not do what I say?” in Luke 6.46.

James 1.22-25

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten that kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having

become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

James 1.22-25 teaches the importance of obeying God's Word. This passage describes two different people, both apparently professing believers. The first hears the Word but does not obey it. He is failing this test of the living faith. He professes to be a Christian but has no assurance of salvation because his response to the Word is hearing but not obeying it. This person "deludes" or deceives himself. While preaching this text at Valley Bible Church, Pastor Dale Whitehead exhorted those who hear the Word but do not have a life pattern of obeying it, by saying, "Stop kidding yourself."

The other person mentioned in James 1.22-25 is the one whose habit is obedience to the Scriptures. This person proves to be a doer of the Word, looking intently at the Scriptures and abiding by them. God regards this person highly. He blesses whatever he does.

God is not pleased when those who profess to be His people go through the outward motions of faith, but their hearts are far from Him. Jesus called such people "hypocrites" in Mark 7.6-7. He also said that their worship of God is in vain. Obedience is an essential part of true discipleship. Of the two people described in James 1.22-25, which are you? What proves it?

"Well then, how can I change to become someone who does obey God's commandments?" you may ask. Psalm 119.9-11 has the answer.

Psalm 119.9-11	How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping <i>it</i> according to Your word. With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.
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The one who studies the Scriptures and treasures is able to grow in righteousness. When a person reads the Word, hears it and chooses to obey, the result is victory over the temptation to sin.

2 Timothy 3.16	All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.
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2 Timothy 3.16 explains God's four-part plan to equip us for every good work through the Bible. Each has to do with sin that exists in our lives. He teaches us the things we need to know to accomplish the Christian's purpose of growing in righteousness. He reproveth us: He shows us what we are doing wrong. God also uses the Word to correct us, that is, He shows us what to do instead. Finally, he trains us in righteousness through the Word. The idea of training is practice. We rehearse what we will do in real life situations as we consider how we must obey the Word. When we are

trained by practicing how to think and what to do to obey God's Word, then in real life situations we are prepared to actually live that way.

John MacArthur demonstrates the connection between obeying the Word and dealing successfully with life's problems:

There is no substitute for submission to Scripture. Your spiritual health depends on placing the utmost value on the Word of God and obeying it with an eager heart. If you think you can find answers to your spiritual problems through human counsel or worldly wisdom, you are forfeiting the most valuable and only reliable source of answers to the human dilemma. Don't relinquish the sweet, satisfying riches of God's Word, (MacArthur 90).

Many times, Christians facing adversity seek escape from the hard times. Rather, our desire should be to obey the Scriptures. Such a motive produces belief in God's promises instead of choosing anxiety or fear (Philippians 4.6-7). Obeying the Word while suffering also changes selfish thoughts to the purpose of serving others. The result of living by the teaching and correction of the Bible is that we are equipped to handle trials while simultaneously bringing glory to God (2 Timothy 3.17, 1 Peter 1.6-9).

Questions to Discuss or Consider

How does your interaction with the Word of God show a regard for it as inspired by God and the absolute authority in your life?

How do you try to figure out what the Bible says about decisions in your life? What sources of counsel (other than the Scriptures) do you seek or follow? Why do you do that?

In your mind, what are reasons that you can not or do not spend time in the Word? What truths from God's Word show these ideas to be false?

What is your current method and frequency of studying God's Word? What must you do to study in a way that results in replacing sin with righteousness?

When you are up against hard times, when have you sought to escape pain? When and how have you honored God by trusting and obeying His Word?

How have you grown in obedience to the Word in the past year?

New Testament Study Format
(ORIGIN UNKNOWN)

Make copies of the blank form (following page) for New Testament study.

Use ½ page for each chapter. List the chapter and date of study in the spaces provided.

“Main Ideas”: Record the main idea of each paragraph (or section) of the chapter. This process helps the Christian to notice all that is being said and to interact with the Lord in relation to each truth.

“Key Verses”: Write out, word for word, the most important verses of the chapter. Which verses are selected will vary from person to person. Key verses include verses summarizing ideas or verses containing new or important truths that apply to the life of the reader.

“Being a Doer of the Word”: Write down specific actions you will perform to live out the truths of the Word in this chapter. This may include doing something (“I will speak more kindly to my brother,” “I will not let the day end without spending time in the Word,” “I will faithfully care for my wife by cleaning the yard Saturday at 8”), ceasing to do something (“I will never again include false expenses on my taxes,” “I will no longer have cable TV in my home,” “I will stop teasing less popular kids at school”), praising God (“Lord, thank You so much for Your strength and these opportunities to be faithful...,” “Father, thank You so much for these truths about Your ongoing love and involvement in my life,” “Father, this passage clearly defines your holiness; I praise You and thank You for the grace by which I am Yours...”), taking stock of life (“The 12 ways I could regard others as more important are...,” “Words I can remember which were not edifying that I spoke last week include...,” “For me to hunger and thirst for righteousness here and now would involve these 9 areas...”), or many other forms of application.

Confess any sin of which you became aware and repent (be able to honestly say to God “I intend to not sin against you in this way again”).

Pray for help to put into practice the applications of which you became aware.

Keep all of your completed sheets so you can review and add to your notes in future studies of the same chapters.

This format is also a family Bible study tool that God has used to transform families. Use it with kids between 9 and 18. Read a New Testament chapter aloud, together. Then, silently, each person completes each section of the study sheet, concluding with prayer for help to obey. Next, the family discusses together the key verses and what they are planning to do to put the truths of the Word into practice.

Many important things occur. Accountability increases. Encouragement expands. Knowing each other at the heart level deepens because each person is letting the others in on their interaction with God about the Word (Hebrews 4.12). Faithful parents become examples of Christians putting off sin and putting on righteousness. Parents are viewed (accurately) as sinners who need to grow, not as perfect. Communication about God, hope, change and life becomes normal.

Chapter _____

Date _____ - _____ - _____

Main Ideas _____

Key Verses _____

Being a Doer of the Word _____

_____ Confessed Sin / Repented

_____ Prayed for Help to Obey

Chapter _____

Date _____ - _____ - _____

Main Ideas _____

Key Verses _____

Being a Doer of the Word _____

_____ Confessed Sin / Repented

_____ Prayed for Help to Obey

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Hour 2

Theology of Submission to God
Walking in Worship

Class Notes

What is Worship?

Worship is the _____ of God as God

We were _____ to worship the Lord

There is great joy in knowing and loving the Lord our God

True worship is _____ energy and time to do all we do for His honor and glory (1 Corinthians 10.31, Colossians 3.23-24)

Pride is the root of sin and is diametrically _____ to the worship of God

Worship Includes Praise and Reverence

Submission is Worship

2 Peter 3.10-11 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness...

This passage describes God as Almighty and sovereign.

The heart that _____ God _____ its _____ to Him in the choices to either sin or obey. What are your choices today?

Worship Includes Rejoicing and Giving Thanks: 1 Thessalonians 5.16 + 18

Private Worship of God

Private prayer is an act of worship because it involves acknowledging God as God and ourselves as subject to His dominion, will and authority.

Our worship should also include the personal honoring of God in the secrecy of our hearts.

Public Worship of God

Public corporate worship of God is _____ in Hebrews 10.25. This worship includes _____ (Acts 4.23-31), singing (Psalm 149.1) and giving (2 Corinthians 9.7-11). Each of these should be done with a focus on _____ our Father.

Pride versus Humility (A _____ of Worship)

Pride (Pride: _____ myself _____ God and others)

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

Humility (Humility: _____ who God is and who I am and _____ accordingly)

2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

John 1:1-4 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201
Hour 2

Theology of Submission to God
Walking in Worship

What is Worship?

Worship is the honoring of God as God. Consider the following summary: “The worship of the church, then, consists of individual, corporate, public, and private service for the Lord, which is generated by a reverence for and submission to Him who is totally worthy,” (Ryrie 496). We will explore many sides of the biblical doctrine of worship in this study.

We were created to worship the Lord. Our primary relationship is with the Almighty Creator. Our role is to honor Him. Wayne Grudem writes:

Worship is therefore a direct expression of our ultimate purpose for living, “to glorify God and fully enjoy him forever.” God speaks of his “sons” and “daughters” as “every one who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made” (Isa. 43:6-7). And Paul uses similar language when he says that “we who first hoped in Christ have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory” (Eph. 1:12). Scripture is clear here and in many other passages that God created us to glorify him. (Grudem 1004)

There is great joy in knowing and loving the Lord our God. Our submission to Him enables us to fully know his love and blessing.

True worship is expending energy and time to do all we do for His honor and glory (1 Corinthians 10:31, Colossians 3:23-24). Worship of the Lord comes from the will, the heart and the mind. Submission to God’s will rather than seeking our own desires honors God. Worship also comes in the form of praise and reverence from the heart. The mind worships God by giving thanks for all things and by recognizing the authority of the Creator.

Pride is the root of sin and is diametrically opposed to the worship of God. Galatians 6:17 explains the opposition of the flesh against the Spirit, concluding, “you may not do the things that you please.” 1 John 2:15-17 shows that the love of the Father includes doing His will. The opposite is described as loving the world: “the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life,” which are not from the Father. These rich Scriptures imply that pride, or, pleasing self, is the foundation of sin. Pride is essentially worship of self rather than God. Paul Enns comments, “It is a fundamental truth of Scripture that only God is to be worshiped (Deut. 6:13; 10:20; Matt.

4:10; Acts 10:25-26),” (Enns 226-227). Pride is at war with the missions of the true believer, which are to obey, serve and thus worship God.

Worship Includes Praise and Reverence

Hebrews 13.15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

The praise of God is declaring the attributes of God to be true. Praise gives glory to Him. Praising God is part of our worship here and now (Hebrews 13.15). It has occurred in heaven in the past (Isaiah 6.3). Praise will be given to God in heaven in the future (Revelation 4.11). Hebrews 13.15 gives practical direction for our praise of God. It should be continual and produces the giving of thanks to Him.

Isaiah 6.4-5 Then I said, “Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I live among a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”

Luke 5.8 But when Simon Peter saw *that*, he fell down at Jesus’ feet, saying, “Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”

Both Isaiah (Isaiah 6.3-5) and Peter (Luke 5.8) demonstrated accurate self-assessment when they realized they were in the presence of God. Each man was painfully aware of his own sin. They feared His power because they knew that the Lord was completely Holy and that they were far from it. Through our studies of the Bible we can also view God and ourselves more accurately. As Grudem observes, “When we reflect on the purpose of worship it also reminds us that God is worthy of worship and we are not,” (Grudem 1004). Reverence for the Lord reveals our own sin and produces the desire for obedience.

Submission is Worship

2 Peter 3.10-11 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in

this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness...

This passage describes God as Almighty and sovereign. In it, God discloses the future, when the current heaven and earth will come to an end through amazing destruction by intense heat. Take a moment to consider how that might look. This Scripture also tells us how we should respond because we know that these things will happen. Christians should strive to be godly today. The heart that worships God subjects its will to Him in the choices to either sin or obey. What are your choices today?

Romans 12.1-2

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. 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 12.1-2 identifies worship as being transformed from conformity to the world to proving what the will of God is. We are urged to bring honor to God in our bodies. These verses are important because they further link the ideas of worship and obedience. Real praise and giving glory to God includes saying the words of worship in prayer and living the difficult life of obedience for the purpose of His honor.

Matthew 15.8-9

“THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS,
BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.
BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME,
TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.”

God reveals the essence of worthless worship in Matthew 15.8-9. Both the nation of Israel and the Pharisees in Jesus' day said words of honor to God but did not worship Him by yielding their hearts to Him. Each group was religious and used the Scriptures as the text for their teachings, yet neither obeyed His Word for the purpose of His glory. Also, they replaced the truths of the Word of God with the rules of men.

We must examine the purity of our own worship. In the hidden dimension of the heart, do we strive to obey God? What do you desire when your heart is far from wanting to honor the Lord? Do you act and speak differently depending on who is watching? If you sin in this manner, will you repent now and work to obey God at the private level of your motives and purposes?

Worship Includes Rejoicing and Giving Thanks

1 Thessalonians 5.16 Rejoice always.

1 Thessalonians 5.18 In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

To rejoice always and to give thanks in all things both necessitate a heart of true worship. Even unbelievers sometimes give thanks to God for the blessings of common grace (Matthew 5.45, Acts 14.16-17). But who is still thankful when there is pain. One who measures life by real worship, with a heart that longs to boldly exalt Christ, gives thanks for the days of agony (Philippians 1.21, 29). In light of the fact that to endure trials causes faith to grow, James called humble circumstances a "high position," (James 1.2-4, 9). The storms of life often reveal the contents of the heart.

Private Worship of God

Private prayer is an act of worship because it involves acknowledging God as God and ourselves as subject to His dominion, will and authority. We are to devote ourselves to prayer (Colossians 4.2). Prayer times can include speaking of God's greatness and our own humility (Psalm 100), pouring out our hearts to God who is our refuge (Psalm 62.8), and requesting help (Philippians 4.6-7). We should pray with the purpose of glorifying God in our circumstances (John 12.27-28). We should pray with humble hearts that realize we are sinners in need of His mercy rather than proud hearts that see ourselves as great (Luke 18.9-14).

Our worship should also include the personal honoring of God in the secrecy of our hearts. This includes the many facets of worship listed in this chapter. Grudem encourages his readers to go forward in this pursuit,

Moreover, if we are truly to draw near God in worship, there must be a striving for personal holiness of life. The author of Hebrews reminds believers to strive for "the holiness without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14), and Jesus says that it is the "pure in heart" who shall "see God" (Matt. 5:8)---a promise that is fulfilled partially in this life and completely in the age to come. (Grudem 1011)

Now is the time for us to honor God as God. Real worship includes obedience, praise, reverence, the submission of our will to His, rejoicing in all times, and giving thanks for all things. We must expend energy to discipline ourselves for such worship of our God.

Public Worship of God

Hebrews 10.25 ...not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Public corporate worship of God is commanded in Hebrews 10.25. This worship includes prayer (Acts 4.23-31), singing (Psalm 149.1) and giving (2 Corinthians 9.7-11). Each of these should be done with a focus on pleasing our Father. Grudem comments, "Because God is worthy of worship and seeks to be worshiped, everything in our worship services should be designed and carried out not to call attention to ourselves, but to call attention to God and to cause people to think about Him," (Grudem 1005). Each of us should consider our participation in worship at church. When are we doing what we do to honor God? When are we doing what we do for other reasons? What are those reasons? What must we do to change? Prayer, singing and giving are each great opportunities to act based on the desires to exalt and honor God.

Group worship also includes fellowship and the sacraments of baptism and communion. These are discussed at length elsewhere in the Pursuing Maturity course.

Pride versus Humility (A Test of Worship)

Pride

(Pride: exalting myself above God and others)

Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil,
Pride and arrogance and the evil way.

Proverbs 16:5 Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord;
Assuredly, he will not be unpunished.

Proverbs 21:24 "Proud," "Haughty," "Scoffer," are his names,
Who acts with insolent pride.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

Humility

(Humility: knowing who God is and who I am and living accordingly)

- 2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bondservants for Jesus' sake.
- Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.
- Luke 17:5-10 And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea'; and it would obey you. But which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the fields, 'Come immediately and sit down to eat?' "But will he not say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me until I have eaten and drunk; and afterward you will eat and drink?' "He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he? "So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'"
- John 1:1-4 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Common Manifestations of Pride

- ❑ Compares self favorably with others
- ❑ Does not compare self with God
- ❑ Inconsistency in studying and applying the Word
- ❑ Sees the sins of others as large and own sins as small
- ❑ High self esteem and belief that pride is good
- ❑ Lives by own priorities, standards, truths-not God's
- ❑ Children who are arrogant
- ❑ Blaming spouse for all problems

- ❑ Parents who are angry
- ❑ Those who think everyone is against them
- ❑ Those who don't resolve conflicts
- ❑ Those who don't forgive

Resources for Further Study

From Pride to Humility, booklet by Stuart Scott; Focus, 2002

Humility True Greatness; C. J. Mahaney, Multnomah, 2005

Humility, A Study of Scripture and Journal; Wayne Johnston, valleybible.net > biblical counseling ministry > resources > Journals with Scripture (Chronicles of Transformation)

Humility: The Forgotten Virtue; Wayne Mack and Joshua Mack, P & R, 2005

The Pursuit of Holiness; Jerry Bridges, NavPress, 1978

Questions to Discuss or Consider

What are the strengths of your worship of God?

How can spending quality time studying the Scriptures produce healthy worship of God in your life?

As a result of this study, what must change in your worship of God? What will you do to cause the needed change in your worship?

What, specifically, is your best opportunity to honor God by replacing pride with humility today? Will you improve your worship of God by pursuing this change?

Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201
Hour 3

Theologies of Sin and Man
Walking in Wisdom About Who We Are

Class Notes

Theology of Sin (Hamartiology)

Isaiah 14:12-15

But you said in your heart,
“I will ascend to heaven;
I will raise my throne above the stars of God,
And I will sit on the mount of assembly
In the recesses of the north.
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.”
Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol,
To the recesses of the pit.

This passage describes the origin of _____ into the universe.

Sin _____ into the world when Adam sinned (Genesis 3.1-10).

Through the one transgression, sin entered _____ man and death came as the result of sin. Condemnation for all resulted from the one sin (Romans 5.12-21).

Every soul is born with the problem of being a _____ to sin (Romans 6.17).

Salvation is _____ for a person to have _____ over sin.

The unbeliever is opposed to God and cannot _____ Him (Romans 8.6-8).

_____ for sins is accomplished on the cross (Colossians 2.13-15).

For those who _____ in Jesus as their propitiation and make a decision to turn away from sin (repent) and live to God, new life begins (Romans 6.4-7). This new life is secure forever (Romans 8.31-39).

The penalty for sin is eternal separation from God (Revelation 20.11-15).

Theology of Man (Anthropology)

God _____ man (Genesis 1.26-27) so He has final _____ over each of us (Romans 9.20-21).

Man is made up of the “inner man” (the mind, soul, spirit and heart) and the “outer man.” (the physical body).

Because of the fall, man is sinful, totally depraved, and needs salvation (Romans 3.23).

The soul _____ by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ enjoys forgiveness and is no longer a _____ to sin, but can overcome sin through the Scriptures (1 Peter 2.1-3) and with the help on the indwelling Holy Spirit (Romans 8.13).

How people perceive life _____ and _____ is directly connected to their beliefs about anthropology.

A Christian’s Guide to Dealing with Sin

Each of us as Christians still _____ (1 John 1.8, Romans 7.21).

What does the _____ require of believers who have _____ ?
We must confess sin to God (Psalm 32.3-5, 1 John 1.9), repent of sin (Proverbs 28.13, Revelation 3.19), confess our sins to those we have sinned against and make any necessary restitution (Matthew 5.23-24).

The Scriptures _____ us on how to respond when _____ against.
We are to love by not taking into account wrongs suffered (1 Corinthians 13.5) and to forgive others as God in Christ has forgiven us (Ephesians 4.32).
God forgives His children by choosing to “remember our sins no more,” according to Jeremiah 31.34.

Often, when we have been sinned against, our thoughts are _____ by the temptation to remember that sin.
Matthew 18.21-35 gives us truth to form a _____ to resolve this problem.

Repentance

_____ is the biblical remedy for a Christian in regard to his or her own sin.

Revelation 3:19: “Be zealous and repent.”

Luke 17.3-4: “your brother.”

2 Corinthians 7.9-10: “repentance without _____ ”

Repentance removes sinning Christians from a place of inviting God's discipline and restores them to a full relationship with their Father (Hebrews 12.5-11).

Repentance is best defined in Psalms 32 and 51. It could be summarized in this statement, “I _____ intend _____ to not sin against _____ You _____ in this way again.”

Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201
Hour 3

Theologies of Sin and Man
Walking in Wisdom About Who We Are

Theology of Sin (Hamartiology)

Isaiah 14:12-15 How you have fallen from heaven,
O star of the morning, son of the dawn!
You have been cut down to the earth,
You who have weakened the nations!
But you said in your heart,
“I will ascend to heaven;
I will raise my throne above the stars of God,
And I will sit on the mount of assembly
In the recesses of the north.
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.”
Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol,
To the recesses of the pit.

This passage describes the origin of sin into the universe. Lucifer was an angel of God in heaven. His sin was the ultimate pride. He had self esteem like no other being before or since. The motive of his heart was displayed in the words that expelled him from the presence of the Lord. This self-exaltation is the essence of sin. This angel, because of his sin, became the devil when God threw him out of heaven.

Sin entered into the world when Adam sinned (Genesis 3.1-10). Adam and Eve disobeyed the one command God had given them (Genesis 2.16-17). Through the one transgression, sin entered every man and death came as the result of sin. Condemnation for all resulted from the one sin (Romans 5.12-21).

All people have sinned and fallen short of God’s Holy standard (Romans 3.23, 1 John 1.8, Galatians 3.22). Every soul is born with the problem of being a slave to sin (Romans 6.17). The unsaved person does not always sin in the worst way or on every occasion, but they are not able to choose to never sin.

Salvation is essential for a person to have victory over sin. The unbeliever is opposed to God and cannot please Him (Romans 8.6-8). The remedy for slavery to sin and the corresponding separation from God is forgiveness through the blood of Jesus

Christ. By His sacrifice, we can be redeemed (Isaiah 53.5-10). Atonement for sins is accomplished on the cross (Colossians 2.13-15). For those who believe in Jesus as their propitiation and make a decision to turn away from sin (repent) and live to God, new life begins (Romans 6.4-7). On the basis of Jesus' death, God declares the believer "not guilty," or justified, before Him (Ephesians 2.8-9, Romans 3.24-26). The result for those who, with Christ, have died to sin is that they also, with Christ, have a new life with God (Romans 6.4-9). Such souls have their names written in the book of life and will spend eternity in heaven with God (Revelation 20.11-21.6).

The penalty for sin is eternal separation from God. After life on earth, comes death and then judgment (Hebrews 9.27). The ominous fate for those who have not been redeemed by Christ is that they will be judged by their sinful deeds, which have been recorded in books. The price for those sins is being cast into the lake of fire forever (Revelation 20.11-15).

New life in Christ creates the ability for a soul to have victory over sin (Romans 6.10-12). The Christian, through the power of the Scriptures (1 Peter 2.1-3) and the indwelling Spirit (John 14.26), is able to overcome temptation and sin (1 John 5.3-5). Sanctification, or changing from sin toward righteousness, is the occupation of every believer until we go home to be with Christ (Romans 8.13).

Theology of Man (Anthropology)

God created man (Genesis 1.26-27). This establishes God's authority over every person. He is the Creator and we are the created, so He has final authority over each of us (Romans 9.20-21). The fact that man is made in the image and likeness of God means that man is like God and represents God in some way. The image of God in man is realized in several aspects, including moral aspects, spiritual aspects, mental aspects, and relational aspects (Grudem, 445-447). We were created to bring glory to God (1 Corinthians 10.31). Man was created perfect, or sinless. But when Adam sinned, death and sin entered the world (Genesis 3, Romans 5). God judged sin. The results of the fall of man were that all were born with a sin nature and that each human being chose to sin also. Man is dead in sin (Ephesians 2.1-3) unless and until made alive with Christ by the gift of saving faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2.1-10).

Man is made up of two basic parts, the "inner man" and the "outer man." The former is referred to with the following interchangeable terms: the mind, soul, spirit and heart. These identify each person's ability to reason, to desire, to choose, to think and to believe. The latter is the physical body. The inner man will live forever, connected to a mortal body while on earth and bound to an eternal body in the life to come. The inner man can be redeemed through the blood of Christ and it is this part of man that begins a new life with God when justified by grace through faith.

The Bible teaches that God created man, male and female (Genesis 1.27, 1 Corinthians 11.8-9). He made man out of dust (Genesis 1.26, Psalm 100.3, Psalm 103.14). God distinguished mankind from other living flesh (1 Corinthians 15.39). Man is a material and spiritual living being.

Scripture tells us man's original condition was "in the image of God" (Genesis 1.26-27). That image or likeness is not a physical one since God is Spirit. However, man was created with a *mental likeness*. Man was given abilities to reason and to work, as implied by the commands to cultivate and keep the garden (Genesis 2.15) and to exercise dominion over the earth and creatures (Genesis 1.26, 28).

Man also bears a *moral likeness* to God. He was created with the capacity to choose either to do right or wrong (Genesis 2.16-17). Unique from other creatures, God breathed life into Adam, reflecting man's spiritual nature (Ecclesiastes 12.7). He has a conscience, a witness within him telling him what he ought to do (Acts 23.1).

Man also bears a *social likeness* to God. As God reflects the objects of His love in the trinity, He endowed man with the capacity to commune with Him (Genesis 3.8) and others (Genesis 2.18, 24). This intimate fellowship designed by God for man and woman was consummated through marriage (Genesis 2.18-25), (Thiessen, 153-156).

Because of the fall, man is sinful, totally depraved and needs salvation (Romans 3.23). After the fall, God continued to seek out man for fellowship with him through faith. God provided a solution to man's sinful condition, salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 4.12). Each person who believes in Christ is forgiven their sins, born again and declared righteous before God, thus restoring fellowship with Him. Each is given everything pertaining to life and godliness (2 Peter 1.2-11), and the regenerate man has been made "...in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Ephesians 4.24), (Aylward, 2).

Through general revelation (what God has shown about Himself in Creation, all men realize that God exists and understand enough truth about Him that they are responsible for their sins against Him (Romans 1.18-21). Through special revelation, the Bible, the Lord supplies the message of the Gospel and the means to be born again (1 Peter 1.23-25). The soul redeemed by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ enjoys forgiveness and a personal relationship with God. This person is no longer a slave to sin, but can overcome sin through the Scriptures (1 Peter 2.1-3) and with the help on the indwelling Holy Spirit (Romans 8.13).

How people perceive life problems and solutions is directly connected to their beliefs about anthropology. Many in our culture teach that man is basically good. Thus, they believe a person's problems are not connected to their own sins and solutions are found within. We who believe the Bible's descriptions of man see the unsaved as guilty of sin, enslaved to sin, and in need of forgiveness and new life through Jesus Christ. This

view regards Christians as saved by God's grace and existing to bring honor to Him by growing in righteousness.

A Christian's Guide to Dealing with Sin

For each of us as Christians, as long as we live on earth, we will still sin (1 John 1.8, Romans 7.21). All sin is opposed to our Holy God. Some transgressions are also offenses against people.

What does the Bible require of believers who have sinned? We must confess sin to God (Psalm 32.3-5, 1 John 1.9), repent of sin (Proverbs 28.13, Revelation 3.19), confess our sins to those we have sinned against and make any necessary restitution (Matthew 5.23-24). Doing these things results in full restoration in our relationships with God and man (Psalm 32.5, 1 John 1.9). Also, these actions clear our consciences.

The Scriptures instruct us on how to respond when sinned against. We are to love by not taking into account wrongs suffered (1 Corinthians 13.5) and to forgive others as God in Christ has forgiven us (Ephesians 4.32). God forgives His children by choosing to "remember our sins no more," according to Jeremiah 31.34. Honoring the Father and Son through this action of forgiveness also reduces conflict with others (Romans 12.18).

Both our own sins and sins against us provide opportunities to honor God by obeying His Word. When we follow the directions of Scripture regarding our response to sin, the results are honoring to God and a blessing to us.

The teachings of the Lord on this matter are vital to our relationships with Him and others. Many believers struggle with unresolved guilt over sin or wrongly react by trying to atone for their own sins. Obeying the Word on these issues returns us to right standing with the Almighty. Following God's instructions on dealing with sin can also lead to the resolution of conflicts between Christians. Often, such ongoing animosity is ended completely when each party obeys God's Word. To choose to no longer think about sins against us changes many relationships, marriages and families. Disputes, retaliation and bitterness are replaced with kindness. The focus of thought also changes from defending self to honoring Christ. Forgiving sins personally does not necessarily negate consequences for those sins.

Often, when we have been sinned against, our thoughts are dominated by the temptation to remember that sin. Yet God calls us to not take sins into account. When you decide to no longer remember sins, what can you do stop thinking about them? This is an important question, since many of us have built long-term habits of remembering such sins frequently.

Matthew 18.21-35 gives us truth to form a strategy to resolve this problem. Jesus tells of a slave who, after being forgiven a debt beyond his ability, then chokes a fellow

slave who owes him three months of pay. For Christians to not forgive others of any sin is like the wrong response of the selfish slave in Jesus' story. The key to forgiving is remembering the immensity of our forgiven debt. So, when we are tempted to remember sins of others against us, we should instead choose to think about Jesus Christ paying the price for our own sins. To do so puts all sins in perspective.

When we go back to the cross and envision the Lord Jesus Christ suffering for our most serious sins, we realize how greatly we have failed to obey God. Also, we are amazed as we consider God's grace and Jesus' incredible love. With this mindset, we return to the reality that someone has sinned against us. By viewing that act against the backdrop of Jesus' sacrifice for our sins, we can do nothing but gladly forgive others and choose to not hold these sins against them. It becomes easy to choose to forget about the sin. What do we think about the transgressor? If they do not know Christ, we pray that they will. If the one who sinned against us is a believer, we rejoice that Jesus' sacrifice covers that sin, too. The result is a true perspective that enables us to remember sins against us no more. The focal point of the whole matter is Jesus Christ, not ourselves or other people. Whatever method we use to no longer remember sins against us should fit the guidelines of Philippians 4.8.

The accompanying journal at the end of this section has assisted many to develop a habit pattern of living out the instructions of the Word for dealing with sin. It is hoped that you will enjoy the same result.

Repentance

Repentance is the biblical remedy for a Christian in regard to his or her own sin. In Revelation 3:19 Jesus, speaking to saved people who had sinned, instructs them to, "Be zealous and repent." In Luke 17:3-4 Jesus identifies the repenting sinner as "your brother." In 2 Corinthians 7:9-10, Paul endorses "repentance without regret" for believers who sin.

The eternal salvation of Christians is not put in jeopardy by acts of sin (1 Peter 1:3-5). Repentance from sin by true believers does not keep them saved, rather it removes them from a place of inviting God's discipline and restores them to a full relationship with their Father (Hebrews 12:5-11).

What is necessary for a Christian to repent of sin? By definition, the Greek word, "metanoia," is a change in thought, the re-thinking of an issue. Repentance is best defined in Psalms 32 and 51. It could be summarized in this statement, "I intend to not sin against You in this way again." These words express the understanding that sin is first and foremost an opposition to the Holy God. Also expressed is the motive of the will, the commitment to strive to resist all further temptation to sin in the same way.

God enables such alteration in thought through His Word. He teaches, reproves, corrects and trains in righteousness, according to 2 Timothy 3:16-17. All four actions describe a portion of the process of repentance: seeing sin as sin, being convicted of sin, and then being given the direction and practical instruction needed to go the other way.

2 Corinthians 7:9-11 describes two kinds of sorrow. The sorrow of the world regrets getting caught and the consequences. It leads to death. The sorrow that is according to the will of God produces repentance without regret. This sorrow is remorseful because sin has opposed our Lord. The result is a repentance that does not regret choosing to turn away from that sin. Such a decision results in not providing oneself with circumstances where further similar sin can be accomplished (Romans 13:14).

Repentance is a decision of the will. Often this is not a brief time of prayer. The Christian may be turning from a sin committed just minutes ago, or from a sin repeated for years. This act of volition, this submission of one's will to the will of a Holy God, is the essence of repentance.

Some people say, "If I repent of the same sin over and over but go back to it, I'm being a hypocrite. I must not really mean it. So I won't repent unless I know I can stick with it." The largest problem with this mindset is the focus on oneself rather than God. God does not qualify "repent" with "if you know you'll never sin again," so no one else should either. Secondly, if the premise were true, all Christians would be hypocrites because all sin in some way (1 John 1:8, Romans 7:14-25). A true believer is saved by faith, not works; he or she is forgiven eternally and the relationship with God is secured by His power (John 10:27-30) and the intercession of the Savior (Hebrews 7:25). So His children should obey Him by repenting of sin and requesting His help to follow through with repentance. The two things sought in such a prayer (mercy and grace to help in time of need) will certainly be granted (Hebrews 4:15-16).

Repent every day if you sin every day. If you need the help of mature believers or those who know the Word more effectively for you to be able to follow through, seek it and get it. But do not disobey God's directive of how to deal with sin ("repent").

If you will pursue, as a course of life, dealing with sin by repenting, you have wonderful days ahead. Your intimate heart-level interaction with God will be honoring to Him. Sanctification efforts (becoming more like Christ, changing toward holiness, putting off sin and putting on righteousness) will be more effective. Understanding of the sinfulness of sin will increase. Realization of the depth of God's grace will expand. Thanksgiving for the work of Jesus Christ on the cross will be more intense.

Questions to Discuss or Consider

What new truths about sin did you learn in this study?

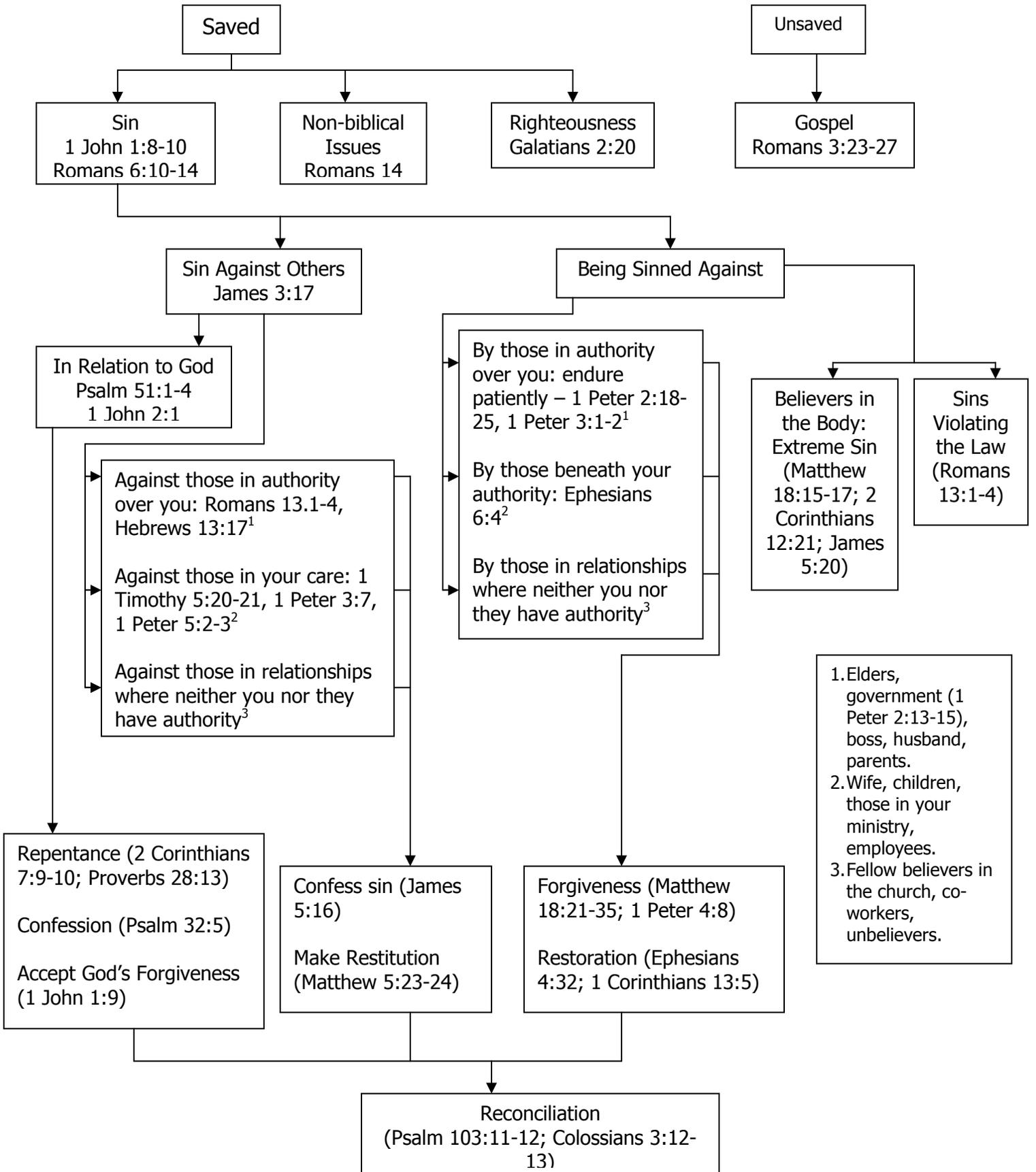
As you consider what God has revealed about mankind in general and about your own life in particular, for what are you thankful? How might the truths about man that God reveals in His Word increase our worship of Him?

How can a more accurate view of man, according to the teachings of the Word of God, improve the counsel you give to people struggling with life problems?

In your household, do you currently practice the Bible's teachings on how to deal with sin? If not, how can you go about implementing them?

What did you learn about the place for repentance in the life of believers?

SIN AND FORGIVENESS FLOWCHART



1. Elders, government (1 Peter 2:13-15), boss, husband, parents.
2. Wife, children, those in your ministry, employees.
3. Fellow believers in the church, co-workers, unbelievers.

A Christian's Journal For Dealing With Sin

Day:

Date:

My own sins

Confess sins to God (I agree with Him: I hate my sins also)

My prayer of repentance (Turning from sin, intending to not sin in this way again)

What I said when I confessed my sin to those I sinned against and asked for their forgiveness

When I was sinned against

I choose to not take these sins into account

I forgave others the way God forgives me (I chose to remember the sins no more; I do not hold these sins against them)

What I chose to think about, to replace thinking about how people sinned against me

Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201
Hour 4

Theology of Sanctification
Walking Toward God's Ways

Class Notes

What Is Sanctification?

Sanctification is _____ toward _____

The Scriptures teach _____ sanctification for believers in Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:22-24, 1 Peter 2:2-3, Philippians 1:6 and Colossians 3.9-10

Justification- Progressive Sanctification-Glorification

Justification occurred the day you became a _____

Progressive sanctification consists of all the time in between the precise points of justification and glorification (the end of our time on earth). Sanctification is the practical transition from being slaves of unrighteousness to being slaves of God for the purpose of righteousness (Romans 6.16-22). It is the action of putting off of sin and putting on of righteousness (Ephesians 4.22-24). The mission of every believer on earth is to grow in sanctification, to become more like Jesus Christ. This is accomplished by the sufficient Word and the sufficient grace of God.

Glorification will come to pass when the believer sees the Lord face to face in heaven (Revelation 21.1-7)

Sanctification is a _____, Not an _____

John 17.17, Ephesians 5.26 and Philippians 1.6

Progress in Sanctification

Both God and the Christian have roles in the believer growing in sanctification:

Philippians 2.12-13 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your

salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Romans 8.13 For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

The Role of the _____ in a Believer's Sanctification

The Lord intends to use Scriptures to _____ us to change toward holiness

Psalm 119.1 How blessed are those whose way is blameless,
Who walk in the law of the Lord.

Psalm 119.56 This has become mine,
That I observe Your precepts.

The heart that glorifies God _____ in a specific manner to the Word

Psalm 119.112 I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever,
Even to the end.

Psalm 119.127 Therefore I love Your commandments above gold,
Yes, above fine gold.

Psalm 119.148 My eyes anticipate the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word.

Put _____ Sin / Put _____ Righteousness: Ephesians 4:22-24

Sanctification: A Transformation in the Mind

Romans 12.2 uses the Greek word, "metamorphoo," to describe this _____

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be
_____ 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.

Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201
Hour 4

Theology of Sanctification
Walking Toward God's Ways

What Is Sanctification?

Sanctification is changing toward godliness. The root of the Greek word translated “sanctification” means “Holy”. In the New Testament, the words translated “sanctification” (hagiasmos) and “sanctify” (hagiazō) come from the root word for “Holy”. Thus, sanctification is changing to become more holy. Millard Erickson explains,

Sanctification is the continuing work of God in the life of the believer, making him or her actually holy. By “holy” here is meant “bearing an actual likeness to God.” Sanctification is a process by which one’s moral condition is brought into conformity with one’s legal status before God. It is a continuation of what was begun in regeneration, when a newness of life was conferred upon and instilled within the believer: In particular; sanctification is the Holy Spirit’s applying to the life of the believer the work done by Jesus Christ, (Erickson, 224).

This definition accurately describes the role of the Holy Spirit and the Son in the life of each Christian.

The Scriptures teach “progressive” sanctification for believers. This concept is defined in Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:22-24, 1 Peter 2:2-3, Philippians 1:6 and Colossians 3:9-10. Romans 12:2 uses the Greek word, “metamorphoo,” to describe this change. This change of having our minds renewed is so bold that it is similar to the water-dwelling to air-breathing change of tadpole to frog. Sanctification also means replacing sin with righteousness. It is an ongoing transformation. As long as we live on earth, there will always be the next sin to overcome. But we face each such challenge with the assurance that victory can be won (1 John 5:3-5). The Bible says that it is God’s will for us to be sanctified (1 Thessalonians 4:3). Such terminology conveys the importance of progress in sanctification.

“Sanctify” and “sanctification” are sometimes used in specific ways. In Hebrews 10:10 and 14, “sanctified” communicates passing into the Christian life through faith in Christ, or, to begin the process of changing toward holiness. In 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7, “sanctification” refers to the process of overcoming a particular sin (sexual immorality). Sanctification is complete when we are home with God in heaven. Then the process of becoming like Christ will be complete (1 John 3:1-3). In all these references, “sanctification” is refers to a particular aspect of transformation toward Christlikeness.

Justification- Progressive Sanctification-Glorification

There are three theological terms which identify the stages of sanctification (past, present and future).

Justification occurs the day a person becomes a Christian. When by faith a soul embraces the Gospel, a lifetime of sin is forgiven and the one previously separated from a Holy God begins a new life (Romans 5.1-2). "Union with Christ" begins, as the believer is united with Jesus in death to sin and new life with God (Romans 6.3-5). Reconciliation to God takes place (Romans 5.10-11). On the basis of redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ, justification occurs. "Justification" is a legal term, signifying that a soul is declared "not guilty" by God. The one who was formerly a slave to sin is freed from the penalty and power of sin (Romans 6.8-14).

Progressive sanctification is the believer's present state. It consists of all the time in between the precise points of justification (the moment of salvation) and glorification (the end of one's time on earth). Sanctification is the practical transition from being slaves of unrighteousness to being slaves of God for the purpose of righteousness (Romans 6.16-22). It is the action of putting off of sin and putting on of righteousness (Ephesians 4.22-24). The mission of every believer on earth is to grow in sanctification, to become more like Jesus Christ. This is accomplished by the sufficient Word and the sufficient grace of God.

Glorification will come to pass when the believer sees the Lord face to face in heaven (Revelation 21.1-7). Sin will no longer be a temptation or an option. On that day, sanctification will be complete. All Christians will truly be like Christ. In His presence, His children will live in glorified bodies that are pure.

Every move away from sin and toward God brings further assurance that we are the Lord's. Wayne Grudem concluded, "The Genuineness of the faith that leads to justification becomes apparent in the results will issue from it. If there are no good works, there has been no real faith nor justification," (Grudem, 804).

Contemplating the three stages of sanctification puts our lives in perspective. We gained our introduction by faith into this life with God. For the first time we were forgiven of sin. One day we will reach our destiny, holiness, by God's grace. We will have life in heaven where neither sin nor temptation exist. Consequently, in between we are to be moving from sin toward holiness, progressing in relation to salvation, changing and being sanctified more and more.

Sanctification is a Process, Not an Event

Sanctification is a journey, not a place. It is an ongoing labor, a work in progress. It is not a finished one-time act. For us as Christians it is our vocation, our purpose and our calling. To be pursuing sanctification is to submit our will to the Lord's.

In John 17.17 Jesus prays for future believers who would receive the Gospel through the words of the apostles. He asks the Father to sanctify us in truth. He states that His Word is truth. This identifies sanctification as a process, since the work God accomplishes through the Word involves progress in relation to salvation (1 Peter 2.1-3). In that prayer almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus asked the Father to change us toward holiness through His Word.

Ephesians 5.26 also shows sanctification to be an ongoing process. There it is said that part of the husband's biblical responsibility is to be used by God to help his wife grow spiritually.

Philippians 1.6 assures us of God's ongoing work in modifying who we are. He began this good work in us. He will continue bringing us toward perfection until the day we see Christ (glorification).

Paul exemplifies this explanation of sanctification in Philippians 3.12-14. He is not perfect at the time of his writing. But he presses on toward that goal. The effort includes forgetting what lies behind (bondage to sin before salvation) and reaching forward to what lies ahead (perfection in heaven). He understands each day in his life in relation to the three stages of sanctification. He also sees sanctification as an ongoing process, one in which he was diligent to be participate.

Progress in Sanctification

Both God and the Christian have roles in the process of a believer's growth in sanctification. Notice how both are apparent in these Scriptures:

Philippians 2.12-13

Romans 8.13

Galatians 2.20

1 Peter 4.10-11

Galatians 5.16-17

Ultimately, sanctification occurs because God causes it (1 Thessalonians 5.23). We only seek sanctification because God first redeemed us (Titus 3.14). In day to day progress in sanctification, God the Father is at work in us to cause growth in holiness.

The indwelling Spirit is also working, opposing the desire of the flesh to sin. Christ in us is also expending energy to overcome sin.

Our part is to work out our salvation. We make decisions of the will to put the deeds of the body to death. We live for Christ, not ourselves. Energy is expended to use the spiritual gifts God has given us. The war of flesh versus Spirit is being waged inside of us. The battle includes the will, the motives, faith, energy and sacrifice. When each victory over sin is won, the glory is God's (Luke 17.5-10).

One who is making progress in being conformed to the image of Christ has growing assurance of his or her salvation (John 15.9). Millard Erickson comments:

The aim of this divine working is likeness to Christ himself. This was God's intention from all eternity: "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). The word translated "to be conformed to" (summorphous) indicates a likeness to Christ which is not just an external or superficial resemblance. It signifies the whole set of characteristics or qualities which makes something what it is, (Erickson, 228).

Our change involves the inner person and the outward actions. May God be glorified in our progress in becoming conformed to the image of Christ and the essence of Christ.

The Role of the Word in a Believer's Sanctification

The Lord intends to use Scripture to enable us to change toward holiness.

Psalm 119.1 How blessed are those whose way is blameless,
Who walk in the law of the Lord.

Psalm 119.33 Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes,
And I shall observe it to the end.

Psalm 119.56 This has become mine,
That I observe Your precepts.

Psalm 119.93 I will never forget Your precepts,
For by them You have revived me.

The tool God has created to equip us for victory over temptation and revival amid agony is His Word. Notice the words in these verses that describe the effort and commitment with which God expects us to respond to His Word. What desires, thoughts and actions would be typical in the life of a Christian who lived out these four verses?

The heart that glorifies God responds in a specific manner to the Word.

- Psalm 119.112 I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever,
Even to the end.
- Psalm 119.127 Therefore I love Your commandments above gold,
Yes, above fine gold.
- Psalm 119.140 Your word is very pure,
Therefore Your servant loves it.
- Psalm 119.148 My eyes anticipate the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word.

Psalm 119 teaches us seek the Word with love and fervor. The Scriptures are to be loved and meditated upon above all else and in hard times. They are the pure truth of God.

Put Off Sin / Put On Righteousness

- Ephesians 4:22-24 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay
aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance
with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the
spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in *the
likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and
holiness of the truth.

This landmark passage gives us a pattern for change which is illustrated throughout the New Testament. We are to put off, or “lay aside” the old self. Verse 22 describes the old self as our “former manner of life,” the “old self,” “corrupted” and including the “lusts of deceit.” These are descriptions of our lives before we were saved. The remains of these former ways are to be put off. We must acknowledge the presence of the influence of these past factors and labor to remove them. The Greek words translated “lay aside” literally mean to take it outside and leave it there.

We are to put on a “new self.” The things with which we are to replace the old self are related to the Lord. They are in His likeness. They are associated with righteousness, holiness and truth. As we clean out the closet of the inner man, tossing sin, lust and selfish ways away, we are to put truth from the Word and righteous God-honoring motives and deeds in their place. The Greek word translated, “put on,” denotes “sinking into” or “putting on” a garment such as a soft coat on a cold day.

Did you notice how verse 23 describes the putting off / putting on process? “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.” There is where the act begins. It starts with renewed thoughts. When we stop asking “What do I want?” and instead ask “What would please God?” or “How can I be a doer of the Word in this situation?” the putting off of sin and putting on of righteousness is imminent.

The pattern outlined in Ephesians 4.22-24 provides us with a plan for change. Just stopping habits of sin is not the complete picture of sanctification. We must also begin new practices of obeying the Word in response to the same circumstances. To follow Ephesians 4.22-24, the believer considers both Scriptures that describe the sin to eliminate and the righteous motives and actions to begin.

Sanctification: A Transformation in the Mind

Romans 12:2

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.

In this passage we are told to stop being conformed to this world. In what ways do you think, speak or act like the world? These become your opportunities to put off sin. Also consider the purposes of the heart. Why do you do these things---what is the thing you are trying to achieve?

The goal is to do God’s will. The concept of change is defined by the word ‘transformed.’ The Greek word is “metamorphoo.” It’s the word from which we get “metamorphosis.” What a vivid picture of dramatic change! The difference between being conformed to the world and proving the will of God is characterized by a crawling caterpillar becoming an airborne butterfly. Putting off sin and putting on righteousness is said to be like a water-breathing tadpole becoming an air-breathing frog. The Lord is making a strong statement with this terminology. We will do well to embrace it.

Pursue metamorphosis of the mind. Be an example of a Christian who is being transformed.

How kind is our God. He takes us, sinners who were once slaves to sin, and gives us new life in Christ. Now He tells us that because of His Word and His work in us we can be transformed (like the caterpillar to butterfly), metamorphosed, in putting off sin and putting on righteousness. How gracious is our God.

Questions to Discuss or Consider

What new ideas did you learn about sanctification?

What practical ways could you use the Scriptures to make progress in replacing sin with righteousness in your life? How will you go about the process of change toward holiness by using God's Word?

Think about two of the sins you currently struggle with. What would it look like to replace the motives, thoughts and actions of these sins by clothing yourself in righteous obedience to the Word?

What encouraging truths of hope are found in this study?

Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201
Hour 5

Theology of Suffering and Trials
Walking with God When Life is Hard

Class Notes

Purpose

John 12.27-28a Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, "Father, save Me from this hour?" But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.

During His _____, Jesus' had a purpose

He was determined to _____ the Father

The _____ for this day, according to John 12.27-28, is to bring glory to the Name of the Father

Courage

John 16.33 These things I have spoken to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

Jesus said, "In the world you have _____"

The Lord Jesus Christ _____ the world in many ways

Jesus _____ everything you or I will ever face
This is the source of hope for every Christian who is facing hard times
Jesus commanded us to take courage because He overcame the world

Following Jesus' example sometimes requires praying, "No matter how I _____, I will be _____ in You, Jesus, because You overcame the world"

_____ and peace have a similar antithesis: fear.
If Jesus is your Lord there is truly nothing to fear

Perspective

1 Peter 1.6-9

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

When you are distressed by trials, you can prove your faith

_____ that results in _____ God and believing in Him when times are hard is _____ to the Lord

It is a _____ to face _____, because trials bring with them the opportunity to choose to love _____ more than we desire pleasure

When you handle _____ correctly, according to 1 Peter 1.6-9, the outcome is a _____ inexpressible and full of glory!

God also rewards faith in hard times by _____ it into security of salvation

Effective Biblical Counseling of the Suffering

Gather good _____

Many ask, “_____?”

What does the Bible teach regarding why Christians suffer?

In the lives of believers, we do know what _____ thinks about our suffering:

He intends to _____ it to work together for the _____ of His child
(Romans 8.28)

The better question, “How can I _____ God?”

Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201
Hour 5

Theology of Suffering and Trials
Walking with God When Life is Hard

Purpose

John 12.27-28a Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, “Father, save Me from this hour?” But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.

During His anguish, Jesus had a purpose. His intention was as clear as ever. He was determined to glorify the Father. The Scriptures explain other aspects of Jesus’ determined plan to please His Father during the anguish described in John 12.27-28. He entrusted Himself to His loving Father (1 Peter 2.23). His perseverance extended to obedience to the point of death (Philippians 2.8). To honor His Father was the purpose of every hour of His life (John 6.38).

The Bible teaches us that what Jesus did while suffering gives us an example to follow (1 Peter 2.21). So, when my soul is troubled, I will strive to do what Jesus did. I will not seek escape to the point of sinning. Prayers for the strength to glorify the Lord will be offered. The drive for pleasing God in the midst of problems is to deny *myself*, as Jesus did, take up my cross and follow Him (Luke 9.23).

The purpose for this day, according to John 12.27-28, is to bring glory to the Name of the Father. Having this clear direction is extremely helpful. We know why we are here in this difficult situation. As Christians we have the Holy Spirit living inside of us, so this goal can be reached. We are new creatures, living a new life with God, and we are dead to sin. Truly alive in Jesus Christ, this is our time to bring Him glory.

Courage

John 16.33 These things I have spoken to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

Jesus said, “In the world you have tribulation.” He understands your hard times because He endured much difficulty (Hebrews 2.18). He was threatened, argued against and accused of serving the devil. A few believed in Him but most called for His crucifixion. As His life ended, He was abandoned by most and in extreme physical pain.

John 16.33 teaches that the reason we can take courage is because Jesus overcame the world. The Lord Jesus Christ overcame the world in many ways:

What / Who Jesus Conquered	Scripture Explaining His Victory
Sin	Romans 6.10-11: “For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”
Death	1 Corinthians 15.55, 57: “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
Temptation	Philippians 2.8: “He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Hebrews 4.15: “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”
The Devil	Hebrews 2.14: “Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.”
All	Philippians 2.9-11: “God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Jesus conquered everything you or I will ever face. This is the source of hope for every Christian who is facing hard times. No one has defeated Him. He has proven Himself to be Lord. He is the ultimate conqueror.

In real life situations, what might it look like to take courage because Jesus overcame the world? Confidence in Jesus can be worded this way, “I don’t care what people think about me, I will obey my Lord,” “I believe one day I will completely overcome this sin because Jesus died to sin and lives to God,” and, “I don’t know how this surgery will go, but I am sure that the Father’s help will be enough to take care of me.” It can also be manifested in motives and actions. Do right despite the opposition of an unbelieving husband. Be honest in an office where no one else is. Share the Gospel openly even if it brings ridicule. Fear God, not man. Love growing in obedience to Christ more than success at your job or spending money on yourself. Long for His Word, not pleasure. Love others more than yourself.

Following Jesus’ example sometimes requires praying, “No matter how I feel, I will be confident in You, Jesus, because You overcame the world.” When we are tired and weak, problems may seem too hard. Yet in the face of discouragement, we can be fearless because Jesus is our Lord. To pray, believing John 16.33, rightly shifts the focus

from feelings to Jesus, the ultimate overcomer. When we struggle with sad feelings, this new direction of focusing on Jesus can be the key to change.

Taking courage as death approaches requires fixing the eyes of the soul on Jesus. Fears and regrets are set aside. We choose instead to remember Jesus paying the price for our many sins. As the focus of thought turns from this world to the next, the brave mind reenacts the scene of His resurrection. Courage is found in His victory over death.

Courage and peace have a similar antithesis: fear. If Jesus is your Lord there is truly nothing to fear. Jesus has crushed all foes. In Him and for Him you can also overcome the world. There is great joy in this confidence. Hebrews 12.1-3 reveals the key to running the race with endurance and not losing heart, “*Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*”

Hope

Philippians 1.6

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

God will not reject you. For you, the child of God who serves Jesus Christ as your Lord, this is a powerful statement of love. This good work He began in you the day you were saved will go on until you enter eternity. There will never be a day when you are alone. There will never be a time that it is not true that your God is working in you and with you. Take comfort in this.

God’s love does not depend on what you do or do not do. This verse does not say, “He who began a good work in you will continue as long as you do well.” No, God will continue this daily association of personal care because of His love and faithfulness. You were saved by grace, not by works (Ephesians 2.8-9). Similarly, you are kept in Him by His grace, not by your works (Hebrews 7.25). There is joy and peace for the child of God because of this aspect of His love.

What exactly is the good work God has begun in you? It is sanctification, or change toward holiness. The day you believed in the Gospel you were forgiven for a lifetime of sin. You had been a slave to sin. When life on earth ends you will be perfect, able to live in eternity without sinning again. In the meantime, here and now, your mission is becoming more like Jesus Christ. It is an assignment that requires the exertion of effort both by the Lord and by you. God is watching you, but not from a distance. His interaction with you is personal and intimate. He is continuing the good work He began in you.

How will God continue this work of sanctification in you? He uses His Word to enable change. Psalm 119.9-11 proclaims the power of the Word. God's part in accomplishing your growth is strengthening your will and teaching your mind with the Scriptures. Your part is seeking Him with all your heart by knowing and obeying His Word. When both parts are being accomplished the result is something no other source can duplicate, the power to have victory over sin! God uses His power to change you in the inner man. That's the engine that drives this vehicle of change.

Confidence in the Word of the living God is real hope. Jesus said the house built on this rock will not fall (Matthew 7.24-29). You should have confidence that in the Word you have all you need for every situation life can present (2 Timothy 3.17).

Confidence in God's ongoing work in your life is also real hope. When you have failed again in your battle with a particular sin, Philippians 1.6 matters. Even on such a dark day, God is working. Feelings of self-hate, failure and filth may fill you. But there is a shining truth to hold onto. You can be confident that He who began a good work in you is still here in your life. Jesus is interceding before the Father for you. He is working today. He will keep working. Even if you are stubborn and do not come to Him in sorrow and repentance, He will discipline you to bring you back (Hebrews 12.5-11). If you are a Christian, you will return to Him, to obey Him as your Lord. When you repent, He will restore you. If you are truly regenerated you can be confident that one day there will be victory in this battle.

Be confident in your Lord, Christian. By building your life on the rock of His Word, you will be able withstand every storm (Matthew 7.24-29). Trust Him. The promises of God are the most certain things in the midst of any hardship. In the end, His Word will have been shown to be true. His love will be seen as real. His help in the time of need will have been enough.

Refuge

Psalm 62.8 Trust in Him at all times, o people;
 Pour out your heart before Him;
 God is a refuge for us.

In this one verse, God communicates immense love for you. He discloses what kind of a relationship He desires between you and Him. You are to trust Him with all aspects of your life and pour out your heart to Him. If you do these things, He will become your refuge. God wants to be the One you always seek for answers and compassion. This is a profound statement of love.

God is asking two things from you. First, trust Him. Believe what He says about Himself in the Bible. God is worthy of your trust because He is Holy, powerful and

eternal. Trust in the Lord when life is hard. Tell Him your fears, your pain and your struggles. Be sure that His love will be enough. Believe that He can change you through His Word. Request that He sustain you by His grace during this time, this conflict or this failure. You can find refuge in Him. There is a life impacting hope for one who trusts in the Lord at all times.

Why do some people put their trust in other people rather than in God? Some trust the love of another person because that is what our culture says is the greatest event in life. Others seek the particular love of a parent or another who has rejected them. Some feel safer with people because they believe they can control them. Choose to trust in God rather than people.

Second, pour out your heart to Him. Tell Him all that is inside you without reservation or distortion. The communication He wants between you and Him is honest and complete. Your heart contains your desires, dreams, fears, aspirations, beliefs, loves and the decisions of your soul. God is asking you to reveal these to Him. To do so requires deep and thorough prayer. This can be accomplished by praying to God orally, speaking to Him from the privacy of your mind, or by writing down your prayers on paper each day. Hold nothing back. Let Him know everything that is inside you, good and bad.

Some have responded to God's request by saying, "Doesn't He already know all these things? Why do I have to tell Him?" Certainly He does understand these things, and at a deeper level than we do. The reason to speak these things to the Lord is that He is God and He told us to. Our place isn't to ask why or refuse until He explains His thinking. True Christians live for Him. We act as He directs.

When we live by trusting God in all aspects of our lives and we regularly pour out our hearts to Him, the inevitable result is that He is our refuge in all times. He will found to be trustworthy by all who obey Psalm 62.8.

Endurance

James 1.2-4

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

James claims there can be joy in the midst of hardship. This is a bold statement. Implied is the concept that the progress of one's faith is more valuable than easy circumstances. He contends that it is worth it to go through a course of predicaments if the outcome is stronger faith. The joy comes from growing closer to the Lord.

Why are there trials in your life? The word translated “trials,” the Greek “peirasmos,” can refer to a temptation, a trial, an experiment or the act of testing or trying someone. God does not tempt people to sin, nor does He cause them to sin (James 1.13-16). He does not facilitate evil. But He does test His people. God can use difficulties caused by our own sins or the sins of others to test us, or He can create His own tests for our benefit. When He does so, He is not out to destroy us, but rather is working for our good by enabling our growth. This is the teaching of James 1.2-4.

The testing of faith is a crucial concept. The Greek word used for “testing” is “dokimion.” It is translated accurately, but there is more to it. Another word derived from the same root word, “dokime,” is employed in the New Testament as “proven character,” “proven worth” and “proof.” God is aware of your adverse circumstances and the good plan He has for their outcome. He wants your character to be strengthened and proven. He wants you to pass the test and be stronger for having done so.

Your mission during adversity is to endure. The Greek word “hupomone” (“endurance”) literally means to “remain under.” How can you remain under the load of adversity? The key is that faith that is being tested. Faith believes all the promises from God’s Word, such as: you are not being tempted beyond ability; God’s grace is sufficient for you; God has granted you everything pertaining to life and godliness; Jesus overcame the world. By filling your mind with these great foundations of hope you can indeed remain under the weight of oppression until it ends. As you stay in that place, you are not tiring or weakening under the heavy load. Rather, your faith is growing because you realize more and more each day that His promises are true. For the one trusting in God’s promises, strength actually increases while remaining under the burden.

The product of enduring to the end of the trial is that you become mature and complete, lacking in nothing. By filling your mind with the hope God provides in His Word, you are strengthened. When the dust settles and the trial is over, you are more confident than ever in your comrade and companion, the living God. You have passed the test. You are more certain than ever before that His Word is true and that His grace is all you need.

Perspective

1 Peter 1.6-9

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now,

but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy
inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of
your faith the salvation of your souls.

When you are distressed by trials, you can prove your faith. The heart of faith desires to bring glory to God, not to escape the pain. One possessing true faith believes that God will provide strength to trust and to obey the Lord to the end.

Faith that results in loving God and believing in Him when times are hard is precious to the Lord. It is a privilege to face difficulty, because trials bring with them the opportunity to choose to love God more than we desire pleasure.

When you handle trials correctly, according to 1 Peter 1.6-9, the outcome is a joy inexpressible and full of glory! How does God cause such joy to be the result of suffering? He answers prayers for strength. He equips us to handle problems effectively through the Word. The believer who is overcoming hard times is more certain of His grace being sufficient than ever before. Even though the days are harsh, God's grace is enough to sustain His child. The believer who relies on the Lord grows in Christ. The final outcome is the deep joy of knowing God.

God also rewards faith in hard times by transforming it into security of salvation. 1 John 5.13 discusses this. One can *know* that they have eternal life as their faith in Him is proven in victories over the temptations that come with difficulty. The treasure that is assurance of salvation is a blessing of the highest degree. It is one of the purposes of trials.

How astounding is the love of God! He takes the storms of life and recreates them to be beautiful opportunities to grow and to fulfill the life purpose of Christians (to bring glory to Him). The outcome is that we obtain the joy of God and receive assurance of our eternal relationship with the Lord.

Things to Know About Counseling Christians During Trials

Common Thoughts You May Encounter

It is common for believers who are in the midst of trials to desire for the hardships to end. Many who are suffering emotionally or physically seek help to make the problems go away.

“Why is this happening to me?” Many who are hurting have focused on that question. I have heard many different theories from believers. They include, “God is punishing me, but I don’t know why,” “I must have sinned in some horrible way that I

don't even realize," "God has abandoned me," "I deserve better," "other people should love me more," and "I just want help to make the problem to go away."

Some are angry at God. They think He is unfair, unloving, or uncaring. A proud view of their own goodness and an incomplete perception of God's holiness produce the idea that God owes them a life of ease here on earth. This group blames God for misfortune. They measure the Lord by how much He blesses them. In this mindset, all troubles are seen as bad and all pleasure as good.

Other people have the desire to honor God in the storms of their lives. These seek help, hope, encouragement, and the teaching of truth from God's Word.

Finally, some just don't know what to think about their problems. They are confused. Many of these folks ask everyone what to do, what to think, and how to feel. Since they get so many different answers, they feel even more overwhelmed by their situation.

Each thought pattern must be addressed in a different way. Our purpose is to help our brothers and sisters by effectively communicating the pertinent truth of the Scriptures. The Word of God is His chosen tool to equip every believer for every good work (2 Timothy 3.16). The Bible is His way to counsel, revive, and give wisdom to Christians going through trials (Psalm 119.24, 93, 98-100). To help such people in your life, you must consider how they are responding to their trials and what the Word says about that.

Gather Good Information

Each person who is going through troubled times has their own circumstances, thoughts, desires, fears, strengths and weaknesses. We must get to know each of these factors well. If we do not, our counsel may answer questions that are not being asked. Or, we may not even realize the real (inner person level) problem. Similarly, if we tell people things they already know, we are not being very helpful.

It is essential to find out facts about the problems:

- What happened?
- When and how did this begin?
- How did you react?
- Who did you talk to about it?
- What did they say?
- What did you think then?
- What has happened between then and now?
- What is your biggest fear?

Also, get information about your friend's response to the dilemma:

- What have you done about the trial?

What have other people told you about it?
What do you think is God's view of your difficulty?
Do you pray? If so, what do you say to God?
What do you think when you think about the present situation?
What help do you seek?

Ask heart level questions, finding out about the motives and desires:

What do you hope happens?
What are you doing to cause that result?
What is your purpose for today?
For you personally, what are the most difficult aspects of what is happening?
Why is that so hard?
What do you believe about God in relation to your present situation?

When you have the answers to these and other questions, then you can consider the important questions for you, "What does the Bible say about this person and their problem?" and "How can I communicate these truths to this person at this time?"

Effective Biblical Counseling of the Suffering

The focal point of counsel must be the sufficient Word of God. The Christian who is hurting or suffering needs hope from the Word, instruction from the Bible on how to think about problems and people, truth from the Word to develop godly motives, and the spiritual discipline to spend quality study time daily for the purpose of growing in faith. God's way to provide each of these things is His written Word.

For those who came to you with unbiblical thinking about their trials, self, or the solution, heart changes change must occur. That needed shift of thought is to move from thinking much about eliminating the unwanted circumstances and little about God to thinking a great deal about God, His Word, and His promises. This will result in a new perspective on the problems and what to do about them.

Practical help is part of serving those who are going through hardship. This may include supplying meals, driving them to doctor's appointments, helping them fill out job applications, going with them to medical visits and asking the doctor incisive questions, finding / giving financial help, or loaning one of your cars. Your brother or sister in Christ is hurting. Visit or call them during the week. This level of care and commitment can be a great benefit and also builds your involvement with them. Different, deeper conversations can often occur in these settings. Also, the encouragement from the Word and times of prayer together can be of great comfort in the setting of your friend's home or office.

Grief

What about grief? Those who love others typically experience a season of grief when dear ones die or move far away. This is not sin. Jesus wept with mourning souls in

John 11.35. He did not regard their grief as sin. There is a mix of grief and joy when believers go home to be with God. We miss them, but we rejoice because they are in the presence of the Father. We take courage, because they are where we all prefer to be, home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5.8). For those who probably were not Christ's when they passed on from this life, we grieve only, and a deeper grief at that.

We counsel those in the midst of grief to choose to think about the true promises of hope from God's Word. These truths put the season into perspective. Answers to grief are found. The questions that have no answers, such as, "Why did God choose now?" and "What will happen to the rest of us in the future?" are set aside as the grieving one fills their mind with what can be known: "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him" and "God's grace will be sufficient."

As time passes, grief normally passes. For those who dwell in the grief process, different counsel is needed. Begin with gathering good information. Why do they not wish to go on with life? What is most sad or difficult about the loss? Why are they depressed? Then proceed to the spiritual disciplines. Assist your fellow believer in developing habits of Bible study with application, prayer, diligent work to glorify God, memorization of Scriptures of hope, and serving others by loving them and doing faithful work or good deeds.

What Does the Bible Teach Regarding Why Christians Suffer?

We live in bodies that feel pain, can suffer and will ultimately die. It has been this way since the sin of Adam (Romans 5.11-21). Original sin, directly or indirectly, is a cause of our pain.

Causes of trials and suffering are listed in Scripture. God disciplines His children to bring them to restoration (Hebrews 12.5-11). Our problems may be the result of our sinful acts (Galatians 6.7-8). They can also be allowed to show us our need to depend on the Lord and not trust in ourselves (2 Corinthians 1.8-9). It can be as simple as the fact that one person is unfair to another (1 Peter 2.18-25) or that God is allowing an opportunity to follow in Jesus' steps (same passage). Hardship could be for the purposes of bringing glory to God or in preparing a heart for saving faith (John 9.1-7). Except for the case of significant unconfessed sin, it is hard to know for certain what is the specific cause of difficulty. Even in cases of blatant sin, sorting out the weight of each factor (God's discipline, reaping what has been sowed, the results of the sins of others, and other causes) is often beyond human discernment.

In the lives of believers, we do know what God thinks about suffering. He intends to cause it to work together for the good of His child (Romans 8.28). Whether in this life (stronger faith, James 1.2-4) or the life to come (to have endured with faith will

bring glory at Jesus' revelation, 1 Peter 1.7, 4.13), one day we will all see that God worked for our good in our times of pain.

Man's will and God's sovereignty both exist. Yet where one ends and the other begins is not something God has clearly revealed in this era. A comparison of two accounts of the same event illustrates this point. In Acts 2.37-38, Peter says it is the "sin" of the people in the audience that caused the crucifixion of Christ. They are responsible and must repent, he says. Yet in Acts 4.28, Peter and the other believers pray, "whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur," regarding the same event. Here, God is said to have preordained the execution of Jesus Christ. So, men chose to kill Jesus and they were responsible for that sin yet simultaneously God predestined it to occur. Both are true. Further, God does not tempt anyone to sin, nor could He possibly cause sin (James 1.12-18). Yet, in His sovereignty, He allows it (Job 1). Also, every man is responsible for his own sin (Romans 8.6-13). God may choose to show us the relationship of the choices of man and His own preplanned schedule in heaven, but He may not. He has not chosen to reveal these things in this age. For now, we are left with the fact that both exist.

Similarly, there are two factors in the issues of pain, trials and suffering. God is sovereign; yet the acts of men cause results. To say we know where one ends and the other begins in cases of chronic pain, undiagnosed illness, and other various types of suffering and hardship goes beyond what God has revealed.

The Better Question, "How Can I Glorify God?"

Whether we know exactly why we suffer or not, God has told us what to do while in pain: "Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right," 1 Peter 4.19. And Philippians 1.20-21: ". . . according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my life, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." The result of such thinking is this, "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am," Philippians 4.11.

For those who are doers of the Word regarding Philippians 1.20-21, there is purpose amid pain and peace coexisting with hurting. The heart set on the glory of God is focused on a higher goal than ending pain. Such a soul is content, because he or she is fulfilling the things God ordained as the opportunities to bring glory to Him for that day (Ephesians 2.10). When the suffering ends, there is joy. But there is greater joy because the season of hardship has brought glory to the Lord. There is rejoicing then, because that person found out once again that God's love was real, His Word was enough, and His grace sufficient.

Keys to Counseling the Suffering

Build a relationship of friendship and compassion. Hurt with them. Don't assume you know their fears or why this is most difficult for them. Find out. Listen well to the answers to your carefully prepared questions. Find ways to communicate your love in Christ. When you speak the truths from the Word that are new to your friend, do so without reservation or apology. Along with the sovereignty of God, also teach of His purposes for the outcome of these things and His certain grace. Know that your responsibility ends with love and accurate communication of the Word. Do all you can to encourage, appeal, teach and even exhort your friend to hear and live by the truths of the Word. But after that, leave the issues of their response to the Word and what happens next in their circumstances between them and the Lord. Fill your mind with confidence in the hope God gives in His Word, for you and for your friend.

Resources

[Hope from God's Word](http://valleybible.net), valleybible.net > biblical counseling ministry

[Christ and Your Problems](#), booklet by Jay Adams

[Pain, the Plight of Fallen Man](#), James Halla, Timeless Texts, Stanley, NC, 2002

[Will Medicine Stop the Pain?](#), Elyse Fitzpatrick and Dr. Laura Hendrickson, Moody, Chicago, 2006

[The Power of Suffering](#), John MacArthur, Jr, Victor Books, New York, 1995

[Homework Manual for Biblical Living, vol 1, Suffering](#), p.170-172; Wayne A. Mack, P & R, Philipsburg, NJ, 1980

[Counseling Those with Chronic Pain](#), presentation at NANC Annual Conference, 2004; CD and complete notes available from: www.soundword.com

[A Christian Growth and Discipleship Manual, Hope Comes from Knowing God as Our Father](#), p. 57-58; Mack and Johnston, Focus, Bemidji, MN, 2005

[A Christian Growth and Discipleship Manual, Turning the Negatives of Life into Positives](#), p.200-202; Mack and Johnston, Focus, Bemidji, MN, 2005

[The Problem of Pain](#), C. S. Lewis, Harper Collins, San Francisco 1940 / 1996

[The Christian Counselor's Medical Desk Reference](#), Dr. Robert Smith, Timeless Texts, Stanley, NC, 2000

Questions to Discuss or Consider

Is it your purpose to bring glory to God or to have difficult times go away? How do your words and actions serve your purpose?

In what or whom do you put your hope during tough times?

What must you do to take courage in Jesus Christ when life is hard?

Will you commit yourself to daily pouring out your heart to God and putting your trust in His promises?

Choose to fix your eyes on Jesus and to pursue the goal of enduring your trials for the sake of God's glory. Pray, telling Him this is the path you will follow to the end.

How can you communicate the love and compassion of Christ to someone who is suffering?

How can you get a person who is focused on pain relief to the point where he or she is ready to hear that there is another option as the focal point of thinking and as the goal of the day?

Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201
Hour 6

Theology of Sharing with, Sharpening and Serving Each Other
Walking with One Another Within God's Family

Class Notes

Sharing with Each Other: Fellowship

Romans 12:5 ...so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

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

These Scriptures teach that we as Christians are _____ in the body of Jesus Christ

and that we are also _____ of one another

Romans 12.10 gives us practical direction on how to _____ this _____

Brotherly _____ is the key

Our Growth Groups

How can you contribute to the quest of Valley Bible to better live out Romans 12.5 and 10?

Sharing with Each Other: Encouragement

Romans 14:19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the

_____ of one another.

Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

To be practical, how can you _____ other believers as described in these Scriptures?

"One Another": See the list of selected "one another" verses

Sharpening Each Other

Proverbs 27:17 Iron sharpens iron, So one man _____ another.

This verse teaches us to have an _____ on each other
In our culture, love is often portrayed as unconditional acceptance
Proverbs 27.17 suggests that friction, opposition, and perhaps even _____ may be involved in the loving act of sharpening one another
The bond of having been used by God for mutual growth has _____ God and brought a deeper relationship between them. They are true friends:

Proverbs 27:6 _____ are the _____ of a friend,
But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

Discipleship

Colossians 1:28-29 And we proclaim Him, _____ every man and teaching every man with all wisdom that we may present every man complete in Christ.
And for this purpose also I labor, _____ according to His power, which mightily works within me.

Effective discipleship includes admonishing and _____
We are to labor and strive in this work of benefiting other Christians in their progress in maturity
A Christian who effectively _____ Colossians 1.28-29 is _____ by God, whose power works mightily in the diligent servant

Confronting Sin: Galatians 6:1-2

Church _____

Serving

Love John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

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

The underlying _____ for serving others is love for _____ and genuine love for our brothers and sisters.

Good Deeds: Titus 2.14, Titus 3.8

Giving: 1 John 3:16-18

Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201
Hour 6

Theology of Sharing with, Sharpening and Serving Each Other
Walking with One Another Within God's Family

Sharing with Each Other

Fellowship

Romans 12:5 ...so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

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

These Scriptures teach that Christians are one in the body of Jesus Christ and that we are members of one another. What a blessing! Indeed, many of us have become divided from biological family members who reject Christ (Matthew 10.34-38), but we have become part of a much larger family, the family of Jesus Christ.

Fellowship with one another should be the reality in each of our lives. This necessitates Christians regarding one another as God sees us. We are one family and members of one another. We are here to relate to each other accordingly. This includes caring for those who are more like us and those who are less like us. We are one in the body of Christ.

Romans 12.10 gives us practical direction on how to pull this off. Brotherly love is the key. This Scripture teaches us to view each other as true family. This love needs no special reason to show or speak kindness. Just being in the same family is enough reason for genuine care and concern. The concept of this love is amplified by the ideas of preference and honor. We act as if the other person is more important than us (Philippians 2.3-4). We rejoice with those who rejoice and hurt with those who are in hard times (Romans 12.15).

Our Growth Groups and fellowship times with one another should be characterized by sharing with each other. This includes deep conversation, practical help, involvement with each other, personal ministry of the Word, growing in righteousness, and wanting to be together. How can you contribute to the quest of Valley Bible to better live out Romans 12.5 and 10?

Encouragement

- Romans 14:19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.
- Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Part of good fellowship is encouragement. Encouragement involves making peace with each other. We should not lie or sin to try to achieve peace, but by working together to each obey the Word, honor God, and kindly serve each other peace can be made. Words and actions that are true (Philippians 4.8) and also build up each other also provide good encouragement. Such fellowship also benefits us in developing relationships that aid us in refusing sin.

To be practical, how can you encourage other believers as it is described in these Scriptures? What can you do to make peace with brothers and sisters with whom you are currently at odds? Consider at least one Christian in your household, at least one at your growth group, and at least one who is a friend. Take some time to consider what words you could say to each of them that would result in building them up in Christ. Then, actually speak these words to each one in a proper setting. Finally, also contemplate your brothers and sisters who are struggling with temptations. Develop a formula for encouraging them often (Hebrews 3.13 says “day after day”) with kind words, truths from the Bible about sin, and great promises of hope from God’s Word for their battle.

“One Another”

See the list of selected “one another” verses at the end of this section. Spend time with God considering how to effectively obey these Scriptures in your relationships with other Christians.

Enemy of Sharing: Selfishness

Selfishness is the opposite of sharing with one another. When I think my life is about me and for me, I have denied that in the body of Christ we are members of one another. If I live with the notions that it is “my” time, “my” money, and “my” house, I am less likely to share with my biological family, much less my brothers and sisters in Christ. Being absorbed in what I want can eliminate the possibility of encouraging and building up others. If I am too busy doing what I want and working on my dreams, I do not think I have time to serve others.

Viewing self as the most important person is common in our culture. We have been told to esteem ourselves highly, that we create our own destiny, to “look out for number one,” to believe in ourselves, and that our feelings are the source of truth. We are even taught to pass this focus on self on to our kids by protecting them from any difficult

circumstances, encouraging them even when they sin, and making sure they are always happy.

Sharing with others is God's way. To do it well, we must think that obeying Him is more important than self. It is a blessing that we are one family as believers. The mindset of loving others as Christ loved us results in the bond of fellowship, regarding it as a privilege to serve others, and the joy of sharing both our lives and the lives of our brothers and sisters.

A Heart for Sharing

How can we develop a heart that wants to share with other believers? We look at the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren," 1 John 3.16. He is our model to follow. We are to love, serve and give *as* He did and *because* He did. "Whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many," Mark 10.44-45. We share, serve and give ourselves up for others to obey Jesus Christ and to honor Him. "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end...If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet," John 13.1, 14. We share our time, money and energy with others to follow our Lord. We choose to share love when that requires hard or unpleasant service because He did. The motive behind sharing should be the desire to honor Jesus Christ. A heart for sharing is a heart that obeys Him.

Sharpening Each Other

Proverbs 27:17 Iron sharpens iron,
So one man sharpens another.

This verse teaches us to have an effect on each other. Are family members, other Christians at church, and believers at your job stimulated to actual change in their obedience to Christ? If they are, you are honoring God by living Proverbs 27.17. If they are not, they could be.

In our culture, love is often portrayed as unconditional acceptance. That idea might be logical if God did not exist. But since He is the Lord, true love for other Christians does not accept and encourage them when they sin against God. Because the purpose of life is to bring glory to our Holy God, love seeks to help the sinning believer to repent of sin and then to grow in righteousness.

Proverbs 27.17 suggests that friction, opposition, and perhaps even pain may be involved in the loving act of sharpening one another. The picture of iron sharpening iron

Secondly, we are to labor and strive in this work of benefiting other Christians in their progress in maturity. It takes time to pray, to study, to consider which form of admonishing fits this situation, and to plan the words to speak. Energy is required of the one who faithfully serves those in his or her life.

Lastly, a Christian who effectively obeys Colossians 1.28-29 is strengthened by God, whose power works mightily in the diligent servant. If you are counting the cost to be more active in assisting others to grow in discipleship, this gives great hope. You will not be alone in the work. Rather, you will have the privilege of needing and receiving energy from the One you are serving.

I Thessalonians 5:14 And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men.

An essential component in practical discipleship is the discerning of the motives of the inner person. How do we find out if one is unruly or weak? We need to find out, or else we may be far from obeying 1 Thessalonians 5.14 (we wouldn't want to be exhorting one we should be helping). How can we know? Ask heart level questions. Find out what your brother or sister is trying to accomplish, what they want, or why they are doing what they do. Also, use the Word to open the lines of communication. The Bible is God's tool for getting to the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Hebrews 4.12). Look at verses that apply to your friend and then discuss them at the motive level (Is this your goal? If you lived by this verse, what would you want, think and do? What does God show you about yourself in these words?).

Confronting Sin

Galatians 6:1-2 Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.

Sharpening each other includes confronting serious sins. We go to the sinning brother or sister because we love them and want them to be restored to God. Though we are speaking truth from the Word that exposes sin, we do so gently and from the motive of love for God and love for this person.

Church Discipline

If the professing believer who is practicing serious sin (1 Corinthians 6.11) does not listen to the Scriptures and your call for repentance, then church discipline is warranted. This is God's ultimate method for giving the wayward one the best opportunity to return to a right standing with God (Matthew 18.15-17). The purpose is restoration. If the final response to the steps of church discipline is to continue in blatant

sin, such a one is regarded as apart from God and opposed to Him. Fellowship is broken. Prayers continue for the one in sin. If he or she returns and repents of sin, they are restored to a right standing with God and are welcomed heartily by the rest of the body with love and rejoicing.

Enemy of Sharpening Each Other: Silence

The enemy of your potential ministry of helping others to become sharper in their walk with God is silence. Often Christians choose to refrain from helping each other grow because they fear rejection or opposition. Others are not willing to make the time for labor and striving to help the brethren. Sometimes believers keep distant from other children of God because they don't want to have to talk about their own needs to grow. In each case the result may be silence, the absence of words that could have sharpened others.

A Heart for Helping Others Grow in Sanctification

Paul revealed his heart for sharpening the Corinthians: "I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls," 2 Corinthians 12.15. Will you go forward with this level of commitment to serve God and the other believers He has put in your life?

Serving

Love

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

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

The underlying purposes for serving others are love for God and genuine love for our brothers and sisters. To love God is to obey His commands (1 John 5.3). Loving God with all our heart, soul and mind and loving our neighbor as ourselves encompasses all other commands (Matthew 22.35-40). If we are born of God and know Him, we love (1 John 4.7). Love must be the motive of our hearts.

How did Christ love us? This is a vital question, since we are to love each other at that same level. Jesus loved us when we were sinners opposed to Him (Romans 5.8). He loved us enough to lay down His life for us (John 15.13).

Our mission is to become more like Christ in how we love. Therefore, the question “How can I properly love God and people today?” is of great importance. Take time this week to consider your spouse, your children, and other fellow believers. Do you love them despite their sins? How are you laying down your life for them? If your motive is true service, to benefit them in their growth in sanctification or with their needs, what actions will you take to love them?

John 13.35 teaches that our serving of each other with the love of Christ should be so extreme that the world will realize that we are His disciples when they see it. By focusing on Christ’s love for us, and because of God’s sufficient grace (Hebrews 4.15-16), we can become such lights to the world.

Good Deeds

Titus 2.14 (Christ Jesus)...who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, *zealous* for good deeds.

The idea of the word translated, “zealous,” is determined energy. Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy when He bravely cleared the temple in John 2.17. The prophecy and the New Testament recording of it include the word “zeal.” Jesus would not be denied. He took control, He was focused. So are we to be in our pursuit of doing good deeds: we will find a way; we intensely desire to do these things; we are concerned only with the Father’s view of us. The only difference is that Jesus’ zeal opposed the sin of sinners, while ours is determined to serve the saints.

Titus 3.8 This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will *be careful to engage* in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.”

The Greek word translated “be careful” is “phrontizo.” It means to give heed, to take thought. The idea is that we are paying attention to our opportunities to do good. We notice them. We think about them. We calculate how to best glorify God by doing good deeds.

The concept of engaging in good deeds means more than just being involved in them. It also includes the ideas of leading, managing, or being in charge of (Greek word: “proistemi”). We are to be absorbed in good deeds, but we are also to be skilled at planning and directing them. We are to develop an understanding of how helping and serving works, to the point that we can oversee, conceptualize a course of action, prepare on a variety of levels, and kindly lead others to be effective in the process.

We can fulfill this aspect of our mission as children of God by becoming the people He redeemed for His own possession: people who are zealous for good deeds. It will take commitment and planning. What will we do to become aware of pressing needs

and general opportunities? How will we change priorities so that we are available when we do notice a good deed to be done? It will take thinking and effort to learn to be proficient at this ministry of practical caring.

Choose to find opportunities to do good deeds, if you are not already doing so. We can decide as individuals and as families how we will respond when a situation arises in which we could serve. How will we decide when to change our plans and when we should not? How will we keep the balance of the biblical priority of serving in marriage and family? Knowing that God is not tempting us beyond what we are able, how will we go about wisely doing good deeds?

Giving

1 John 3:16-18 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

This passage speaks of helping our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is not about giving money to strangers, but rather giving what is needed to people we know to be Christians. Loving other Christians this way starts within our families and our church. We are called to fill needs (physical help, money, time, assistance) as the normal course of action.

Enemy of Love: Pride

Pride exalts self and focuses on desires for its own pleasure (James 4.1-6, Luke 18.9-12). Pride is the enemy of love. Love does not seek its own way, is not arrogant, and bears all things; love forgives (1 Corinthians 13.4-7). For love to increase in your soul, pride must decrease.

What thoughts of pride reside in you? These include reasonings about how you are better than others, who was wrong when you were right, your superior character, what you want, why you deserve great things, and wondering when you will finally get the love owed to you. Can you think of other proud ideas that God sees in your heart? Pride is at war with love. When it occupies your soul, love cannot.

A Heart for Service

Please commit yourself to improving in love and service. Despite our pride and our weaknesses, we are not being tempted beyond our ability (1 Corinthians 10.13). God's grace will surely be sufficient for us in this quest (2 Corinthians 12.9-10). The Word exposes our sin (2 Timothy 3.16), but it also enables us to change (2 Timothy 3.17, 1 Peter 2.1-3). This is our time to love as Jesus Christ loved us.

Resource:

A Biblical View of Relationships With Others:
“One Another” Passages in the New Testament (selected)

For consideration with the Lord as you study the “one another” Scriptures:

How do I do this now?

What could I do to better live this verse?

What wrong motives or practices prevent me from doing what this verse says?

How will love for God and love for others help me to grow in obedience to this verse?

John 13:34-35	A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.
John 15:12	This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.
Romans 12:5	...so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
Romans 12:10	Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor...
Romans 14:13	Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way.
Romans 14:19	So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.
Romans 15:7	Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.
Galatians 5:13	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 5:26	Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

Ephesians 4:2	...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love...
Ephesians 4:25	Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.
Ephesians 4:32	Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.
Ephesians 5:21	...and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.
Colossians 3:9	Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices...
Colossians 3:13	...bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.
Colossians 3:16	Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
1 Thessalonians 5:11	Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.
Hebrews 3:13	But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
Hebrews 10:24, 25	...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.
1 Peter 1:22	Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart...
1 Peter 4:9	Be hospitable to one another without complaint.
1 Peter 5:5	You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Questions to Discuss or Consider

Romans 12.5 teaches that we are one in the body of Christ. How can you better share your life with other Christians?

We are to sharpen one another, according to Proverbs 27.17. If you fall short in this area, what fears or beliefs hold you back from obeying God in this matter? Who should you sharpen and who should you be sharpened by?

Why is the effective practice of Colossians 1.28-29 very helpful to a church body?

The enemy of sharpening one another is silence. Under what circumstances have you been silent when you should have ministered to others in this way? What can you do to better serve other Christians in your life?

What must you think and do to be effective in loving others as Jesus Christ loved you (1 John 3.16-18)?

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Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201
Hour 1

Theology of Scripture
Walking by the Word of God

Class Notes

Inspiration of the Word of God

2 Timothy 3.16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

The Bible is inspired by God. The Greek word translated “inspired” is *theopneustos*, which literally means, “God _____ breathed _____ out.”

2 Peter 1.20-21 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Henry Thiessen explains the roles of God and man in the writing of the Bible: “The Holy Spirit so guided and superintended the writers of the sacred text, making use of their own unique personalities, that they wrote all that He wanted them to write, without excess or error,” (Thiessen, 65).

An implication of the doctrine of inspiration is that it causes the Bible to have ultimate authority. Wayne Grudem: “The authority of Scripture means that all the words in

Scripture are God’s words in such a way that to _____ disbelieve _____ or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey _____ God _____,” (Grudem, 73).

Inerrancy of the Bible

The Bible in its _____ original _____ form is inspired by God and completely without error.

Personal _____ Study _____ and _____ Application _____ of God’s Word

_____ Memorizing _____ Scripture enables us to think about the Word throughout the day.

The Sufficiency of God's Word

Hebrews 4.15-16 gives us great hope for change

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

2 Timothy 3.17 So that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

The fact that the Bible is sufficient to prepare us for all events of life should motivate us to study with energy and desire.

Obedience to God's Word

John 14.21: "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me,"

Luke 6.46: "And why do you call Me, "Lord, Lord," and do not do what I say?"

James 1.22, 25 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers

who delude themselves. ...But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a

forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

Pastor Dale Whitehead, "Stop kidding yourself."

John MacArthur demonstrates the connection between obeying the Word and dealing successfully with life's problems:

There is no substitute for submission to Scripture. Your spiritual health depends on placing the utmost value on the Word of God and obeying it with an eager heart. Don't relinquish the sweet, satisfying riches of God's Word, (MacArthur 90).

Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201
Hour 2

Theology of Submission to God
Walking in Worship

Class Notes

What is Worship?

Worship is the honoring of God as God

We were created to worship the Lord

There is great joy in knowing and loving the Lord our God

True worship is expending energy and time to do all we do for His honor and glory (1 Corinthians 10.31, Colossians 3.23-24)

Pride is the root of sin and is diametrically opposed to the worship of God

Worship Includes Praise and Reverence

Submission is Worship

2 Peter 3.10-11 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness...

This passage describes God as Almighty and sovereign.

The heart that worships God subjects its will to Him in the choices to either sin or obey. What are your choices today?

Worship Includes Rejoicing and Giving Thanks: 1 Thessalonians 5.16 + 18

Private Worship of God

Private prayer is an act of worship because it involves acknowledging God as God and ourselves as subject to His dominion, will and authority.

Our worship should also include the personal honoring of God in the secrecy of our hearts.

Public Worship of God

Public corporate worship of God is commanded in Hebrews 10.25. This worship includes prayer (Acts 4.23-31), singing (Psalm 149.1) and giving (2 Corinthians 9.7-11). Each of these should be done with a focus on pleasing our Father.

Pride versus Humility (A Test of Worship)

Pride (Pride: exalting myself above God and others)

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

Humility (Humility: knowing who God is and who I am and living accordingly)

2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

John 1:1-4 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201
Hour 3

Theologies of Sin and Man
Walking in Wisdom About Who We Are

Class Notes

Theology of Sin (Hamartiology)

Isaiah 14:12-15

But you said in your heart,
“I will ascend to heaven;
I will raise my throne above the stars of God,
And I will sit on the mount of assembly
In the recesses of the north.
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.”
Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol,
To the recesses of the pit.

This passage describes the origin of sin into the universe.

Sin entered into the world when Adam sinned (Genesis 3.1-10).

Through the one transgression, sin entered every man and death came as the result of sin. Condemnation for all resulted from the one sin (Romans 5.12-21).

Every soul is born with the problem of being a slave to sin (Romans 6.17).

Salvation is essential for a person to have victory over sin.

The unbeliever is opposed to God and cannot please Him (Romans 8.6-8).

Atonement for sins is accomplished on the cross (Colossians 2.13-15).

For those who believe in Jesus as their propitiation and make a decision to turn away from sin (repent) and live to God, new life begins (Romans 6.4-7). This new life is secure forever (Romans 8.31-39).

The penalty for sin is eternal separation from God (Revelation 20.11-15).

Theology of Man (Anthropology)

God created man (Genesis 1.26-27) so He has final authority over each of us (Romans 9.20-21).

Man is made up of the “inner man” (the mind, soul, spirit and heart) and the “outer man.” (the physical body).

Because of the fall, man is sinful, totally depraved, and needs salvation (Romans 3.23).

The soul redeemed by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ enjoys forgiveness and is no longer a slave to sin, but can overcome sin through the Scriptures (1 Peter 2.1-3) and with the help on the indwelling Holy Spirit (Romans 8.13).

How people perceive life problems and solutions is directly connected to their beliefs about anthropology.

A Christian’s Guide to Dealing with Sin

Each of us as Christians still sin (1 John 1.8, Romans 7.21).

What does the Bible require of believers who have sinned?
We must confess sin to God (Psalm 32.3-5, 1 John 1.9), repent of sin (Proverbs 28.13, Revelation 3.19), confess our sins to those we have sinned against and make any necessary restitution (Matthew 5.23-24).

The Scriptures instruct us on how to respond when sinned against. We are to love by not taking into account wrongs suffered (1 Corinthians 13.5) and to forgive others as God in Christ has forgiven us (Ephesians 4.32). God forgives His children by choosing to “remember our sins no more,” according to Jeremiah 31.34.

Often, when we have been sinned against, our thoughts are dominated by the temptation to remember that sin. Matthew 18.21-35 gives us truth to form a strategy to resolve this problem.

Repentance

Repentance is the biblical remedy for a Christian in regard to his or her own sin.

Revelation 3:19: "Be zealous and repent."

Luke 17.3-4: "your brother."

2 Corinthians 7.9-10: "repentance without regret"

Repentance removes sinning Christians from a place of inviting God's discipline and restores them to a full relationship with their Father (Hebrews 12.5-11).

Repentance is best defined in Psalms 32 and 51. It could be summarized in this statement, "I intend to not sin against You in this way again."

Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201
Hour 4

Theology of Sanctification
Walking Toward God's Ways

Class Notes

What Is Sanctification?

Sanctification is changing toward godliness

The Scriptures teach progressive sanctification for believers in Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:22-24, 1 Peter 2:2-3, Philippians 1:6 and Colossians 3:9-10

Justification- Progressive Sanctification-Glorification

Justification occurred the day you became a Christian

Progressive sanctification consists of all the time in between the precise points of justification and glorification (the end of our time on earth). Sanctification is the practical transition from being slaves of unrighteousness to being slaves of God for the purpose of righteousness (Romans 6.16-22). It is the action of putting off of sin and putting on of righteousness (Ephesians 4.22-24). The mission of every believer on earth is to grow in sanctification, to become more like Jesus Christ. This is accomplished by the sufficient Word and the sufficient grace of God.

Glorification will come to pass when the believer sees the Lord face to face in heaven (Revelation 21.1-7)

Sanctification is a Process, Not an Event

John 17.17, Ephesians 5.26 and Philippians 1.6

Progress in Sanctification

Both God and the Christian have roles in the believer growing in sanctification:

Philippians 2.12-13 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your

salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Romans 8.13 For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

The Role of the Word in a Believer's Sanctification

The Lord intends to use Scriptures to enable us to change toward holiness

Psalm 119.1 How blessed are those whose way is blameless,
Who walk in the law of the Lord.

Psalm 119.56 This has become mine,
That I observe Your precepts.

The heart that glorifies God responds in a specific manner to the Word

Psalm 119.112 I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever,
Even to the end.

Psalm 119.127 Therefore I love Your commandments above gold,
Yes, above fine gold.

Psalm 119.148 My eyes anticipate the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word.

Put Off Sin / Put On Righteousness: Ephesians 4:22-24

Sanctification: A Transformation in the Mind

Romans 12.2 uses the Greek word, "metamorphoo," to describe this change

Romans 12:2 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.

Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201
Hour 5

Theology of Suffering and Trials
Walking with God When Life is Hard

Class Notes

Purpose

John 12.27-28a Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, "Father, save Me from this hour?" But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.

During His anguish, Jesus' had a purpose

He was determined to glorify the Father

The purpose for this day, according to John 12.27-28, is to bring glory to the Name of the Father

Courage

John 16.33 These things I have spoken to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

Jesus said, "In the world you have tribulation"

The Lord Jesus Christ overcame the world in many ways

Jesus conquered everything you or I will ever face
This is the source of hope for every Christian who is facing hard times
Jesus commanded us to take courage because He overcame the world

Following Jesus' example sometimes requires praying, "No matter how I feel, I will be confident in You, Jesus, because You overcame the world"

Courage and peace have a similar antithesis: fear.
If Jesus is your Lord there is truly nothing to fear

Perspective

1 Peter 1.6-9

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

When you are distressed by trials, you can prove your faith

Faith that results in loving God and believing in Him when times are hard is precious to the Lord

It is a privilege to face difficulty, because trials bring with them the opportunity to choose to love God more than we desire pleasure

When you handle trials correctly, according to 1 Peter 1.6-9, the outcome is a joy inexpressible and full of glory!

God also rewards faith in hard times by transforming it into security of salvation

Effective Biblical Counseling of the Suffering

Gather good information

Many ask, “Why me?”

What does the Bible teach regarding why Christians suffer?

In the lives of believers, we do know what God thinks about our suffering:

He intends to cause it to work together for the good of His child (Romans 8.28)

The better question, “How can I glorify God?”

Pursuing Maturity
Walking with God: Discipleship 201
Hour 6

Theology of Sharing with, Sharpening and Serving Each Other
Walking with One Another Within God's Family

Class Notes

Sharing with Each Other: Fellowship

Romans 12:5 ...so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

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

These Scriptures teach that we as Christians are one in the body of Jesus Christ

and that we are also members of one another

Romans 12.10 gives us practical direction on how to pull this off

Brotherly love is the key

Our Growth Groups

How can you contribute to the quest of Valley Bible to better live out Romans 12.5 and 10?

Sharing with Each Other: Encouragement

Romans 14:19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

To be practical, how can you encourage other believers as described in these Scriptures?

"One Another": See the list of selected "one another" verses

Sharpening Each Other

Proverbs 27:17 Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another.

This verse teaches us to have an effect on each other
In our culture, love is often portrayed as unconditional acceptance
Proverbs 27:17 suggests that friction, opposition, and perhaps even pain may be involved in the loving act of sharpening one another
The bond of having been used by God for mutual growth has pleased God and brought a deeper relationship between them. They are true friends:

Proverbs 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend,
But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

Discipleship

Colossians 1:28-29 And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom that we may present every man complete in Christ.
And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

Effective discipleship includes admonishing and teaching
We are to labor and strive in this work of benefiting other Christians in their progress in maturity
A Christian who effectively obeys Colossians 1:28-29 is strengthened by God, whose power works mightily in the diligent servant

Confronting Sin: Galatians 6:1-2

Church Discipline

Serving

Love John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

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

The underlying purpose for serving others is love for God and genuine love for our brothers and sisters.

Good Deeds: Titus 2.14, Titus 3.8

Giving: 1 John 3:16-18