



The
FLOW
Adult CURRICULUM

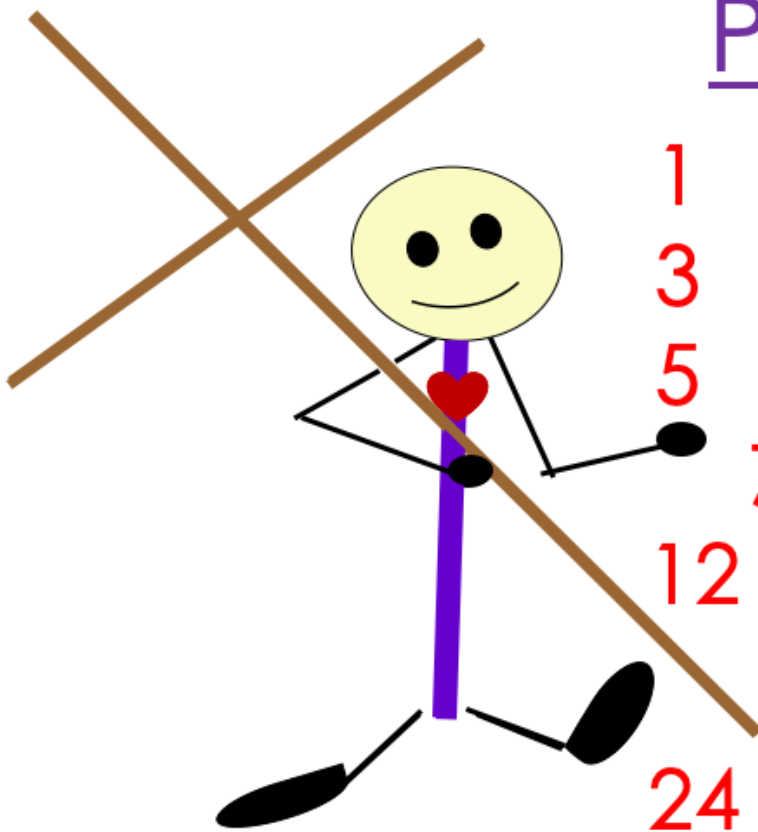
#4

HANDS

Acts 28:31c

(Come And See Christianity book pages 18-19)

The FLOW



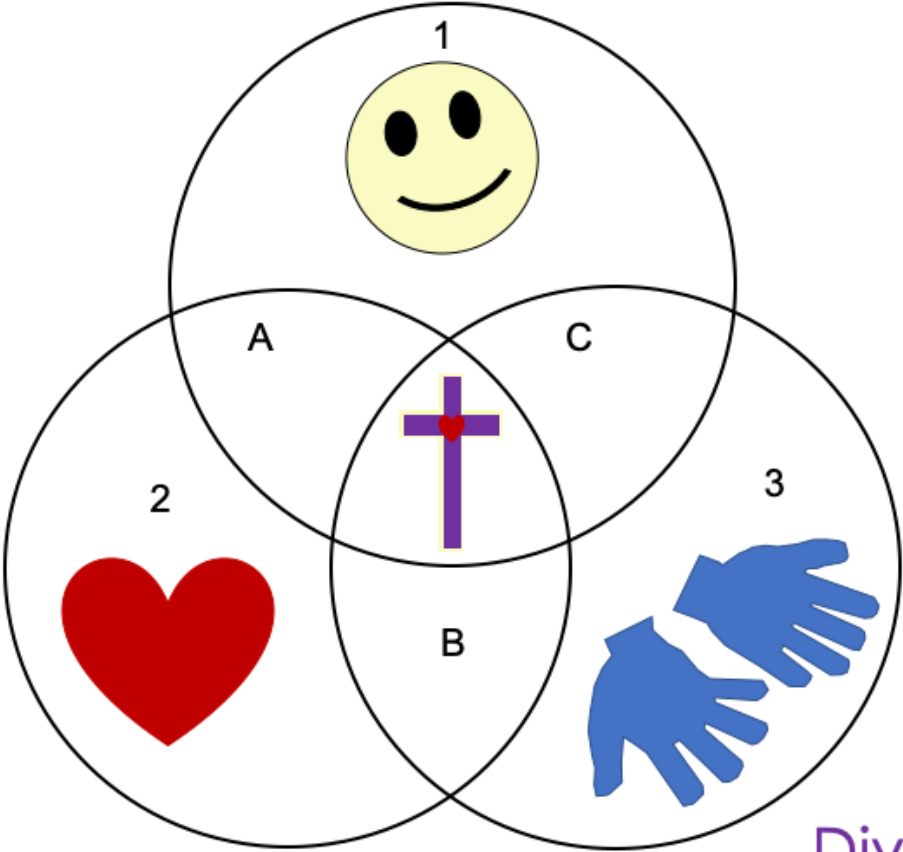
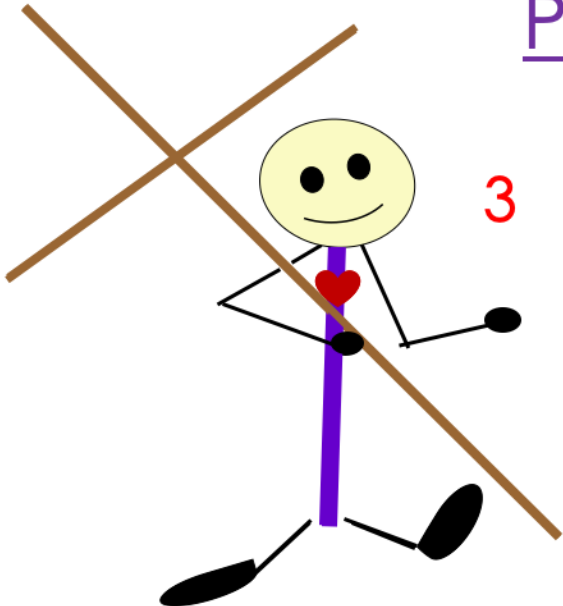
PREVIEW:

- 1 Design
- 3 Divisions
- 5 Disciples
- 7 Details
- 12 Disciplines
- 24 Distinctives

SECTION TWO: 3 Divisions

PREVIEW:

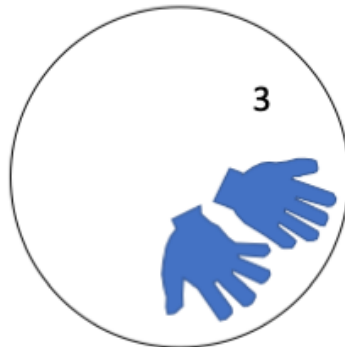
3 Divisions



3
Divisions

3 DIVISIONS: ALL people, everywhere, have 3 internal “divisions”... The **Head, Heart, & Hands** unite to define & describe our lives. That’s why healthy Christianity & **biblical discipleship** intentionally informs, inspects & inspires all 3 divisions.

The HANDS



“The HANDS” represent
a person’s **actual & active**
walk, work & war-faring witness.

The HANDS



24 DISTINCTIVES
Christians live in **contrast**
to the world & its ways...
Come & see 24 distinctly
Christ-like commitments.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

INTRO:

Before we begin to focus on the “HANDS,” we must first remember and revisit the FLOW’s multidimensional context. Herein we are reminded that section one began with the “One Divine Design” – also known as the Gospel and its biblical worldview. Next, we moved on to section two, with its “Three Divisions: HEAD, HEART, and HANDS.” Now, with the HEAD and HEART “divisions” addressed in our previous lessons, we are ready to concentrate on the HANDS, the third and final division of this section’s 3-legged, theological stool. With that said, never forget – without all three legs (HEAD, HEART, and HANDS – also known as truth, love, and works) the stool is not trustworthy... it will eventually fall.

Fear God and work hard.

- David Livingstone

PRAYER:

LORD, we seek to bless You with all that is within us. Help us here, we pray, to be that blessing as we come to better understand You and Your eternal truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Help us to see with Your eyes and love with Your love, all that You would reveal to us through Your Word, Your will, and Your ways. May we grow in our grasp of Your realities, Your means of restoration, and Your mission of reproduction. In the holy name of Jesus we pray. Amen and Amen

CONTEXT:

Macro

God's Word is filled, from cover to cover, with commands and exhortations, calling humanity to live with a passionate and predominate posture of humble, faithful obedience. Beginning in the Garden of Eden, the LORD promised to bless His people thru right-hearted relationships and hard work (Genesis 1:28). Similarly, in verses 18-19 of Revelation chapter 22, some of the very last words in the last chapter of the last Book of the Bible, God declares: "I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: 'If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.'"

Micro

*All of God's people are ordinary people
who have been made extraordinary
by the purpose He has given them.*

- Oswald Chambers

Message

There is an eternal seriousness that must accompany any discussion or teaching which focuses upon the walk, work, and witness of the individual Christian and/or the corporate Church. Why? Sadly, in today's context and global cultures, counterfeit Christianity and cancerous churches abound. One need only to compare God's Word, will, and ways with the average, lukewarm, self-centered, consumeristic "crowd" to see the tragic contrast.

Wicked men obey from fear; good men, from love.

- Augustine

BIG IDEA: **Christians have been set free... to BE the HANDS of Christ!**

PREVIEW:

1. HIS Hands
2. HOLY Hands
3. HELPING Hands

TEXT:

Acts 28:31c
“...unhindered!”

1. HIS Hands

Illustration

Let Your Life Speak

...The Quakers have a saying about calling that I love: “Let your life speak.” Finding your calling is about finding your voice... Calling isn’t something you choose, like who you marry or what house you buy or what car you buy; it’s something you unearth.

You excavate. You dig out. And you discover. We usually ask little kids, What do you want to be when you grow up? I wonder if we’re setting them up for failure with that question. Maybe a better question is, Who are you? What do you think God made you to do when you grow up? That, my friends, is the question. Who are we? How are we hardwired by our Maker?

What is it that God had in mind the day we were born? These are the questions of calling and vocation. I was brought up in a culture that essentially said, John Mark, you can do anything you put your mind to. If you work hard enough, if you believe in yourself, if you’re patient, you can do anything. This is such a middle-class-and-above American way to think. Nobody in the developing world would ever talk like that...

...It’s also dangerous because, sadly, it’s not true. I can’t be anything I want to be, no matter how hard I work or how much I believe in myself. All I can be is me. Who the Creator made John Mark to be. If we fight the image of God in us — even if we succeed in the short run — it will come back to eat us alive.

*John Mark Comer, Garden City,
Zondervan, 2015, pp. 73-7*

EXPLANATION

The “HANDS” of true Christians reveal and reflect the true love of God.

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. – James 1:17

In short, as Jesus boldly and unapologetically proclaimed in John 15:5 “*apart from Me you can do NOTHING.*” Let that sink in. Nothing means nothing.

Stated in the context of our lesson, without the sacrificial and sustaining work of Christ, nothing attempted or completed, regardless of how good it looks or feels, has ever been an authentic byproduct of God’s blessing. No. Instead, whatever “fruit,” (in any and all cases), comes from non-abiding and disobeying motives and/or methods, is at best, plastic fruit, and at worst, rotting, man-made counterfeit fruit. If it’s not of Christ, it’s not Christian!

The success or failure of our work as a church or mission depends, in the last resort, largely, not in the number of preachers we put into the field, nor on the size of our congregations, but rather on the character of Christianity we and our work produce.

- Duncan Campbell

Application

We would all be well served to remember the lineage of God’s love and how He alone gave us a life to live. Never forget, it is by His grace and for His glory that The Gospel of Jesus Christ empowers each Christian and every true Church to serve the world, locally, regionally, & globally, with His HANDS.

Revisit the following trail of truth in love often, commit it to memory and meditation... and it will help to prepare your HANDS for prayer and praise, work and worship, serving and sharing – all within the guardrails of God’s Word... and under the guidance of His Spirit.

1. Genesis 1 & John 1
2. Genesis 3 & John 3
3. Matthew 4:19
4. Matthew 16:18
5. Matthew 28:18-20

2. HOLY Hands

Illustration

It is Christ who is to be exalted, not our feelings. We will know Him by obedience, not by emotions. Our love will be shown by obedience, not by how good we feel about God at a given moment. "And love means following the commands of God." "Do you love Me?" Jesus asked Peter. "Feed My lambs." He was not asking, "How do you feel about Me?" for love is not a feeling. He was asking for action.

- Elisabeth Elliot

Explanation

As noted above, the true "HANDS" of God are His HANDS...

To expand that truth and begin to bring the core characteristics of His HANDS into focus, it is imperative that we see His call for HOLY HANDS in our understanding of Christianity (and the biblical worldview).

To be clear, that is not to say that all Christians' HANDS are perfect or holy in the purest sense. Instead, it is to establish holiness as a bullseye, an ideal, the ultimate objective in all that is undertaken.

1 Peter 1:15-16

as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

If you know that God loves you, you should never question a directive from Him. It will always be right and best. When He gives you a directive, you are not just to observe it, discuss it, or debate it.

You are to obey it.

- Henry Blackaby

With holiness understood to be the defining description and core characteristic of the Christian's HEAD-truth, HEART-love, and all aspects of their works and service, let us look briefly to a handful of biblical supports and calls for HOLY HANDS...

Colossians 3:23

“Do all things as unto the LORD...”

John 14:15

“If you love Me you will obey My commands...”

Luke 14:27

*“Unless you are willing to pick up your cross and follow Me
you cannot be My disciples”*

James 2:17

“Faith without works is dead faith...”

Philippians 1:27

“Live a life worthy of The Gospel...”

1st John 3:18

*“Let us not love with word and tongue
but in action and in truth.”*

John 13:35

*“They will know you are My disciples by
your love for one another.”*

Matthew 7:15

“Beware the wolves in sheep’s clothing...”

Matthew 10:16

“Be shrewd as serpents and as innocent as doves.”

*Joy, not grit, is the hallmark of holy obedience. We need to be light-
hearted in what we do to avoid taking ourselves too seriously.*

It is a cheerful revolt against self and pride.

- Richard J. Foster

Application

Our BRIDGE family Manifesto offers a quick & comprehensive look at how you can BE Christ's loving & living, holy HANDS in a dark & fallen world.



One FAITH. One FAMILY. One FOCUS.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will BE My witnesses (locally, regionally, and globally).” – Acts 1:8

One Question: *WHAT DO YOU WANT?*

One Offer: *COME AND SEE.*

One Promise: *TRUTH IN LOVE!*

Our Truth-in-Love Distinctives: We are...

- 1.** Responding to grace & repenting of sin...
- 2.** Trusting the Bible & obeying God's Word...
- 3.** Growing in-Christ & living Spirit-led...
- 4.** Praying for guidance & following by faith...
- 5.** Dying to self & carrying our cross...
- 6.** BE-ing the Church & loving one another...(*truly loving* one another)
- 7.** Equipping the saints & exemplifying supernatural unity...
- 8.** Ministering as ambassadors & discerning matters shrewdly...
- 9.** Worshipping God vertically & experiencing Him horizontally...
- 10.** Proclaiming the Gospel (*no matter what*) & fishing for men...
- 11.** Making disciplined-warriors & winning spiritual-warfare...
- 12.** Loving our King & serving His kingdom!

3. HELPING Hands

Illustration

If any occupation or association is found to hinder our communion with God or our enjoyment of spiritual things, then it must be abandoned. Anything in my habits or ways which mars happy fellowship with the brethren or robs me of power in service, is to be unsparingly judged and made an end of -- 'burned.'

Whatever I cannot do for God's glory must be avoided.

- A. W. Pink

Explanation

All Christians have been saved to serve – period (cf. Acts 1:8). Moreover, all who would identify biblically as HIS HANDS will seek to BE HOLY HANDS that long and love to witness to the world, in large part, by BEing Christ-like, HELPING HANDS.

Matthew 20:25-28

But Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. [26](#)But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, [27](#)and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. [28](#)For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Application

As always, God and His Word put it best... For those who honestly want to be His Holy and Helping HANDS, the Bible offers us both a blueprint and a bullseye for effective, God-honoring, HANDS. In a nutshell, go as Christ came, do what Christ did, live as Christ lived, love as Christ loved, hate as Christ hated, and witness to His with-ness, each and every day.

John 20:21

"As the Father has sent Me, so now I send you."

It will not do to say that you have no special call to go to China. With these facts before you and with the command of the Lord Jesus to go and preach the gospel to every creature, you need rather to ascertain whether you have a special call to stay at home.

- Hudson Taylor

REVIEW: **Christians have been set free... to BE the HANDS of Christ!**

Holy joy will be oil to the wheels of our obedience.

- Matthew Henry

CLOSE:

True faith will inevitably manifest itself in the performance of works of obedience... The performance of works are the result of faith and the fruit of justification.

- R. C. Sproul

For What?

You can only learn what obedience is by obeying.

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

God has given His adopted family, the biblical Church, His working, Holy HANDS, for the express and ultimate purpose of bringing Him glory by finding and growing more God glorifiers.

But he is unworthy the name of a minister of the gospel of peace, who is unwilling, not only to have his name cast out as evil, but also to die for the truths of the Lord Jesus.

- George Whitefield

So What?

Partial obedience is not obedience at all...

- Richard Sibbes

Living as the unhindered HANDS of God is a defining matter...

It's a matter of WORSHIP.

It's a matter of LOVE.

It's a matter of APPRECIATION.

It's a matter of OBEDIENCE.

It's a matter of MISSION.

It's a matter of ETERNITY.

*Greatness in the kingdom of God is measured
in terms of obedience.*

- John Stott

Now What?

As is the case with most constructive, equipping lessons, the best thing to do now is assimilate and apply what you have learned. Take what you have been taught from God's Word and incorporate it into your personal sense of defining purposes and daily priorities.

Do not stand idly by. There is an urgent and eternal need for the HANDS of God to go out into all the world and proclaim the Gospel (Mark 16:15) with a sense of Christ-like urgency. So, God's truth in your HEAD and His love in your HEART, now is the time to go BE His ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:20). Go BE His aroma (2 Corinthians 2:15). Go BE the very army of the Almighty (Ephesians 6:10-20). Per Titus 2:15: "Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you."

Pray as though everything depended on God.

Work as though everything depended on you.

- Augustine

*Wherever you are, be all there. Live to the hilt every situation
you believe to be the will of God.
- Jim Elliot*

PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, thank You so much for the Truth and Love of Your Word, will, and ways. Please help us to absorb and apply ALL that You have shared and commanded in the Bible. May our heads be infilled with Your defining Scriptures, for the express purpose of informing, inspecting, and inspiring our sanctified hearts and serving hands.
In Jesus name we pray.
Amen and Amen

Related SERMON:

"Unhindered"
Acts 28:31c
August 7, 2016
Sermon Series: The Way Of God