



The
FLOW
Adult CURRICULUM

#6

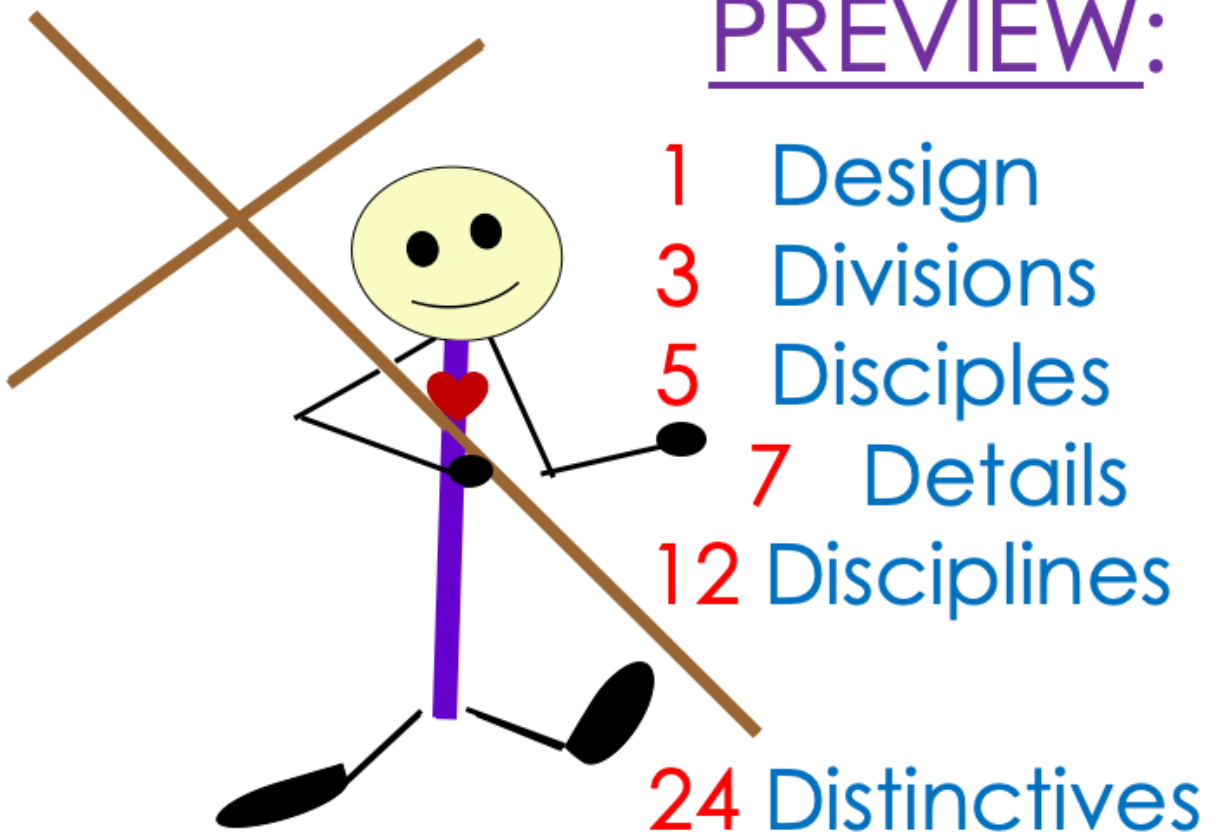
LOVER

1 Peter 2:1-3

(Come And See Christianity book pages 26-27)

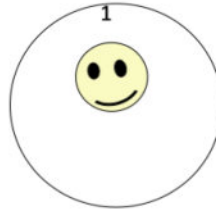
The FLOW

PREVIEW:



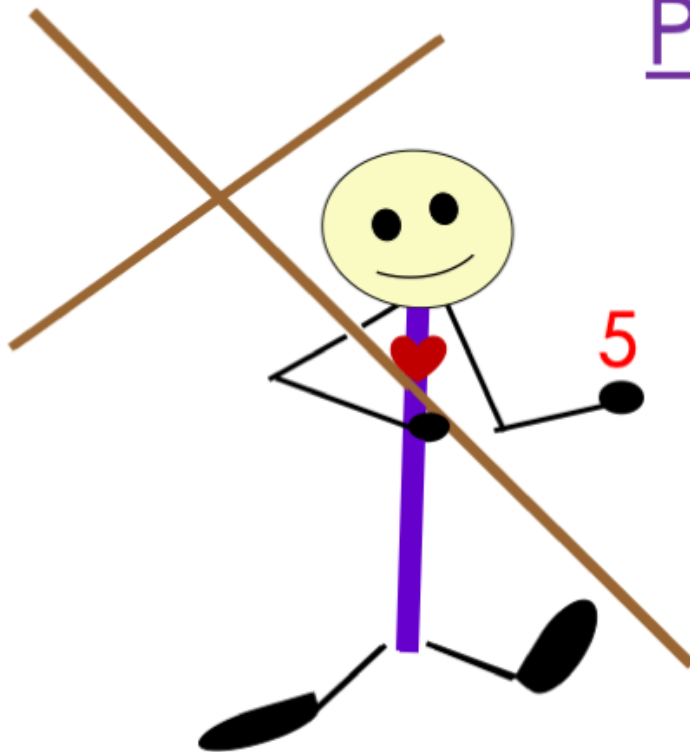
SECTION THREE: 5 Disciples

The
HEAD

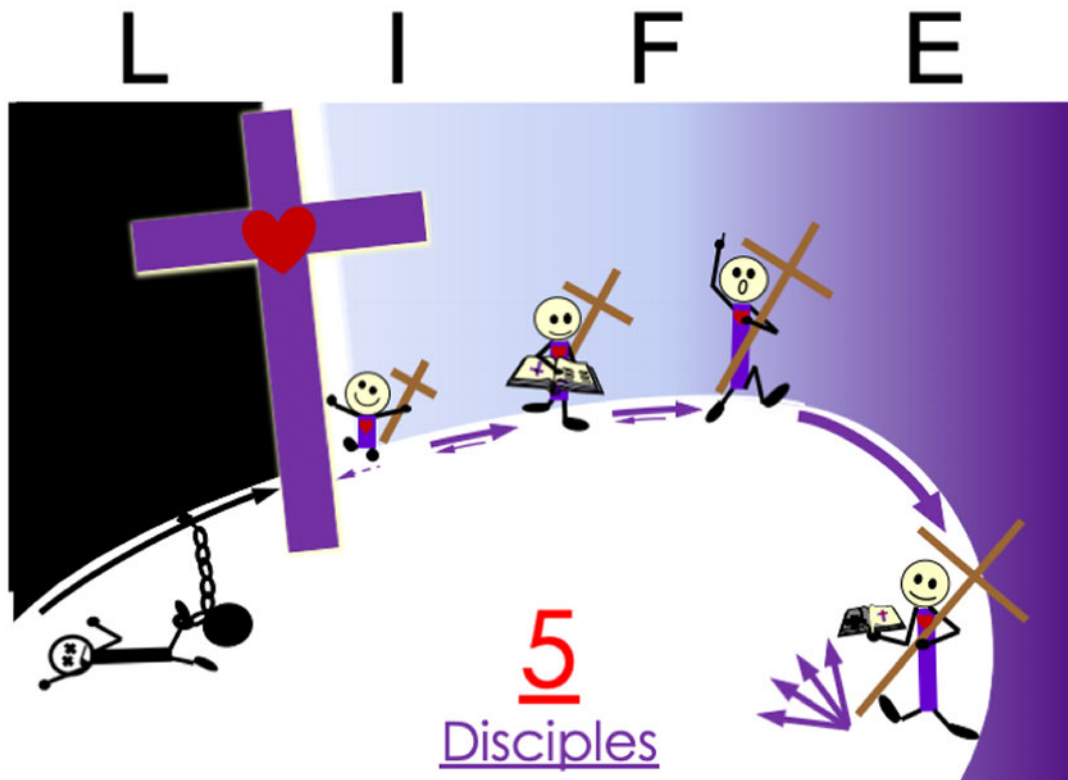


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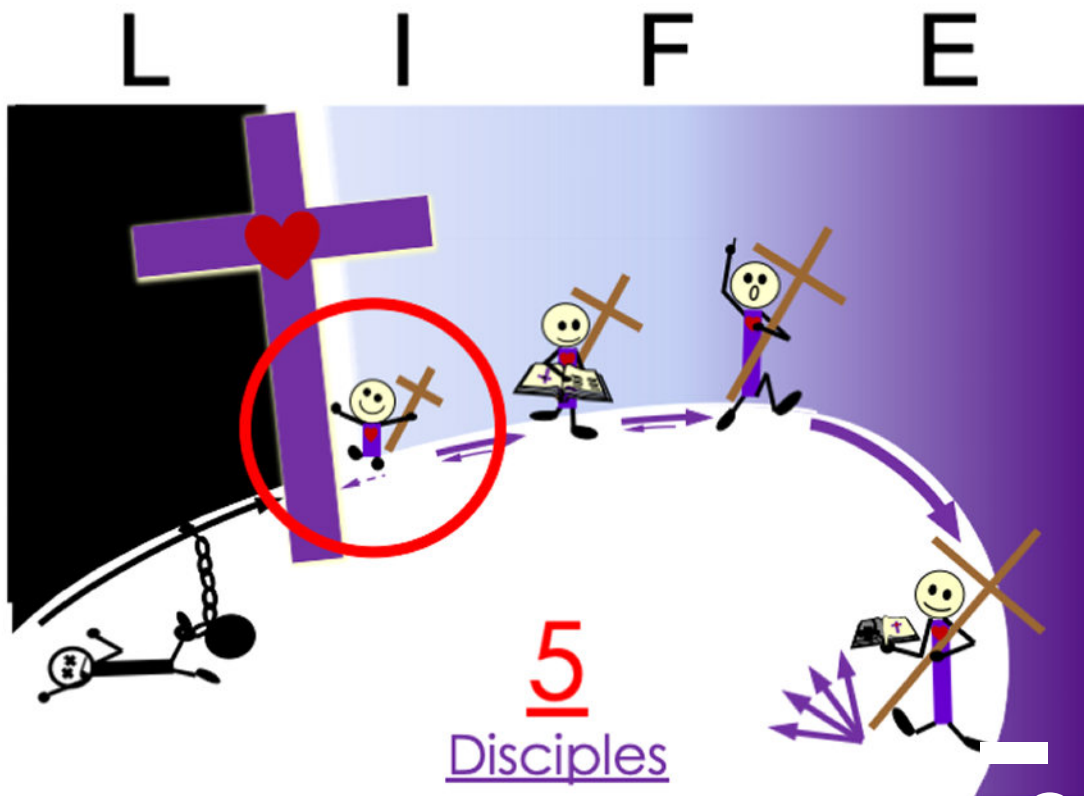
PREVIEW:



5 Disciples



5 DISCIPLES: The world is made up of 5 different types of people (a.k.a. “disciples”). Spiritually speaking, everyone fits somewhere in this biblical & progressive blueprint... Are you amongst the Lost, Lovers, Learners, Leaders, or Lifers?



The LOVER

All born-again, Holy Spirit-filled, repentant & faithful **"infant-followers"** of the Lord Jesus Christ... **Lovers** are miraculously changed (while often missionally immature), in-filled but not fully informed; eternally saved but not yet missionally shaped. **Lovers** are saved sinners (aka - **biblical disciples**) now ready-for and in need of maturing discipleship

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:

Welcome back to Section Three, where we are continuing to discuss the “5 Disciples.” Herein we will show where and how Christianity can give an account for EVERY human being... past, present, and future. In other words, Christianity has a valid designation and description for every person, everywhere, throughout all human history. No exceptions. Zero! Moreover, our “Framework” diagram (also known as the “LIFE Cycle” in earlier training materials), offers a user-friendly, visual, and comprehensive tool that aides in the spiritually-defining and missional-placement of each individual on earth. EVERY single person. Bar none.

Having said that, being able to define and describe all of humanity is both valuable and validating for any professing worldview. In the case of Christianity, our worldview is unique, in part, to the extent that we recognize the reality and relationship that exists between the 5 types of disciples who make up the world’s population.

At the risk of overstating the obvious, take note, without a cohesive comprehension of how the people of the world relate to one another, at the core of their humanness, it would be hard to advance, with any viable seriousness, a credible worldview. Fortunately, the God of the Bible has been more than forthright when it comes to engaging and explaining the human condition, from birth to burial, from the Garden of Eden to each soul’s eternal destination.

Finally, before we begin, just to be clear, let us briefly review Section One (“1 DESIGN”), Section Two (“3 DIVISIONS” – HEAD, HEART, and HANDS), and how they have begun the “FLOW,” which now cascades down to Section Three and the “5 DISCIPLES.”

Seeing the holistic connection between Come And See Christianity’s FLOW sections is critical for one’s long-term understanding of the definitions and dynamics that make up a biblical worldview AND Christian discipleship. Stated differently, God’s one divine design calls for the sharing of THE Gospel, per God’s Word, will, and ways (a.k.a. a biblical worldview). At the same time, the missional “design” of Almighty God calls for the miraculous transformation of each person’s three, core “divisions” – their HEAD, their HEART, and their HANDS. Now we are ready to address humanity in whole.

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

In our previous lesson, we looked at the first type of the world's five disciples... the LOST. By definition, in that study, we learned that there are three types of LOST:

1. The "LOST - LOST" who will spend eternity in hell.
2. The "LOST ASTRAY" who may be eternally OR just temporarily LOST (time will tell).
3. The "LOST NO MORE" who get "found" and adopted by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-10) into God's hard-working family.

As we begin to focus on the LOVER, it is important to note that the forthcoming points of contrast will be juxtaposed against the "LOST - LOST," while simultaneously highlighting the new birth that comes to the LOST NO MORE" (also known as a LOVER... the new, baby, Christian).

Whereas the "LOST - LOST" are all those who lack an eternally-saving, miraculously-transformative, life-giving, Gospel-centric relationship with Jesus The Christ. The "LOVER," by contrast, is a born again (John 3:3), Holy Spirit filled (Acts 1:8), repentant and faithful (Mark 1:15), infant follower of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 4:19). LOVERS are miraculously changed (2 Corinthians 5:17), while remaining missionally immature. LOVERS are perhaps best summarized as early-on, saved sinners, who put the "work" in the old adage: "works in progress." LOVERS are the babies in God's family.

Next, it is absolutely essential that the Holy Bible, God's inspired and inerrant (without error) Scriptures, be used, in full context, to define and describe ALL aspects and dynamics that prove to be relevant to our topic. In short, God's Word is both, the Almighty's absolute AND authoritative truth. In our study and in our lives, if God said it, that settles it!

Finally... it is important to recognize that any thorough attempt to explain what Christianity means by “saved” must, at the very least, expand upon and explain some foundational, biblical, spiritual, personal, and eternal relationships. For example, there is a need to understand the relationship between Creator God and created man (John 1:1-18); between the Savior of souls and the enemy (1 Peter 5:8) of souls; between truth and lies; between love and hate; between heaven and hell; between sin and salvation; between the temporal and the eternal; between the Word of God and the opinions of the world... All of these and more have a part to play when it comes to understanding the cause, affect, grace, and blessings of the LOVER.

NOTE:

When we speak of the four (4) “saved” types of disciples (LOVER, LEARNER, LEADER, & LIFER) in a collective, historical, and global sense, together, (in contrast to the LOST), they make up the biblical, Christian Church (capital “C” intended). Herein you will find true and authentic (while still sinful and imperfect) Christianity.

Micro

While the Bible speaks of the capital “C” Church in an “all-Christians” everywhere context, make no mistake, the global-macro, family portrait of Christianity is nothing more than a culmination of all the micro, individual, and personal Christians being pooled together as the Church. In other words, biblically speaking, being a LOVER (aka. baby Christian) is a very personal and, by God’s grace, eternal condition. Amen! Consequently, Christ’s best ambassadors personally Engage, Explain, Equip, Empower, and Exemplify Christlikeness when discipling LOVERS and helping them to share Christianity’s “gospel” – which literally means “good news.”

At this point, we would be well served to revisit our “Framework” diagram, which divides all of humanity into 5 specific types of DISCIPLES: the LOST, the LOVER, the LEARNER, the LEADER, and the LIFER. Remember, from our introduction to Section Three, every human being belongs, at any given point in their lives, in one of these five DISCIPLE groups. Moreover, each person’s positioning is based on their current, spiritual relationship to Creator Christ and all that His cross represents.

When a defiled man is born again, his habits are changed, his thoughts cleansed, his attitudes regenerated and elevated, his activities put in total order, and everything about him that was dirty, degenerate or reprobate is washed and made clean.

Spencer W. Kimball

Message

Either sin is with you, lying on your shoulders, or it is lying on Christ, the Lamb of God. Now, if it is lying on your back, you are lost; but if it is resting on Christ, you are free, and you will be saved. Now choose what you want.

- Martin Luther

BIG IDEA: **The LOVERS are miraculously SAVED sinners.**

PREVIEW:

1. CONVERSION
2. COMMISSION
3. CONFIRMATION

TEXT:

1 Peter 2:1-3

So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 2(BE) Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation – 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

1. CONVERSION

Illustration

Have you ever noticed how the topic of miracles tends to polarize people? To that end, for the most part, there tends to be three isolated positions when it comes to discussing miracles... First, there is the silent majority, those who are best described as indifferent and disinterested. On average, they do not care about the subject, nor do they find it worthy of any in-depth investigation. The second group is the overly enthusiastic “charis-maniacs” who, to their own discredit, tend to dramatize and

sensationalize every fortuitous experience in their lives. Lastly, there are the baptized in lemon juice, Scripture-forsaking, crusting curmudgeons who believe all claims of miracles, especially biblical miracles, are either misconceptions, outright deceptions, or just a good old work of the devil.

Where do you stand when it comes to biblical miracles?

Christ's miracles were not the suspension of the natural order but the restoration of the natural order. They were a reminder of what once was prior to the fall and a preview of what will eventually be a universal reality once again--a world of peace and justice, without death, disease, or conflict.

- Tim Keller

Explanation

When the second chapter of 1st Peter opens with the word “So” or “Therefore,” (depending on your translation), it is connecting the defining context of chapter one with that which is about to follow, namely, the call for Christians to love and live like Christ, especially in difficult times.

For our purposes, as we unpack a biblical understanding of the LOVER, we need to realize and embrace some of the essential doctrines and realities described in chapter one. In short, to understand Christian “CONVERSION,” (the process of being born again, and the birthing of a new baby LOVER), the following are just a handful of foundational truths, seen in 1st Peter chapter one, that are in and at the heart of the LOVER.

1. The loving grace of the triune God: Father, Son, & Holy Spirit
2. The doctrine of Election (God chooses His children)
3. Christians are to live as exiles during their earthly existence
4. The doctrines of God's foreknowledge & predestination
5. The exclusivity of Jesus Christ's effectual sacrifice & cross
6. The universality of Jesus Christ's gospel and invitation
7. The causal work of God & the power of Christ's resurrection
8. The guarantee of eternal security & God's protective power
9. The reality of heaven (and hell) as eternal destinations
10. The Gospel saves sinners by grace alone through faith alone
11. Christian joy overcomes worldly struggles and grief
12. Christian hope, holiness, love, and mission are harmonized

As you can see, there is more to understanding and BE-ing born again into Christianity than most realize. At the same time, it is important to know that there is also a beautiful simplicity to Christ's good news. You may wonder, "How do such complexities and simplicities coexist?" This answer is awesome, if not obvious...

Christianity unifies mind-blowing realities with straight-forward redemption through the MIRACLE of The Gospel of Jesus the Christ. It is amazing how these two little words, "miracle" and "Gospel" can simply say, cover, and accomplish so much. For additional insight and biblical proof, one need look no further than 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. Amen and AMEN!

I never have any difficulty believing in miracles, since I experienced the miracle of a change in my own heart.
- Augustine

When you couple the miraculous work of Creator Christ (John 1:1-18), with the sovereign selection process of Almighty God (Jeremiah 1:5, Ephesians 1:4), along with the Gospel's human responsibility to repent and believe (Mark 1:15), you have the building blocks for understanding the truth in love of Christian "CONVERSION." This miracle of grace, received by faith, and resulting in good works, is definitively clear in Ephesians 2:1-10 (an absolute bedrock passage in biblical Christianity).

I believe the doctrine of election, because I am quite certain that, if God had not chosen me, I should never have chosen Him; and I am sure He chose me before I was born, or else He never would have chosen me afterwards; and He must have elected me for reasons unknown to me, for I never could find any reason in myself why He should have looked upon me with special love.
- Charles Spurgeon

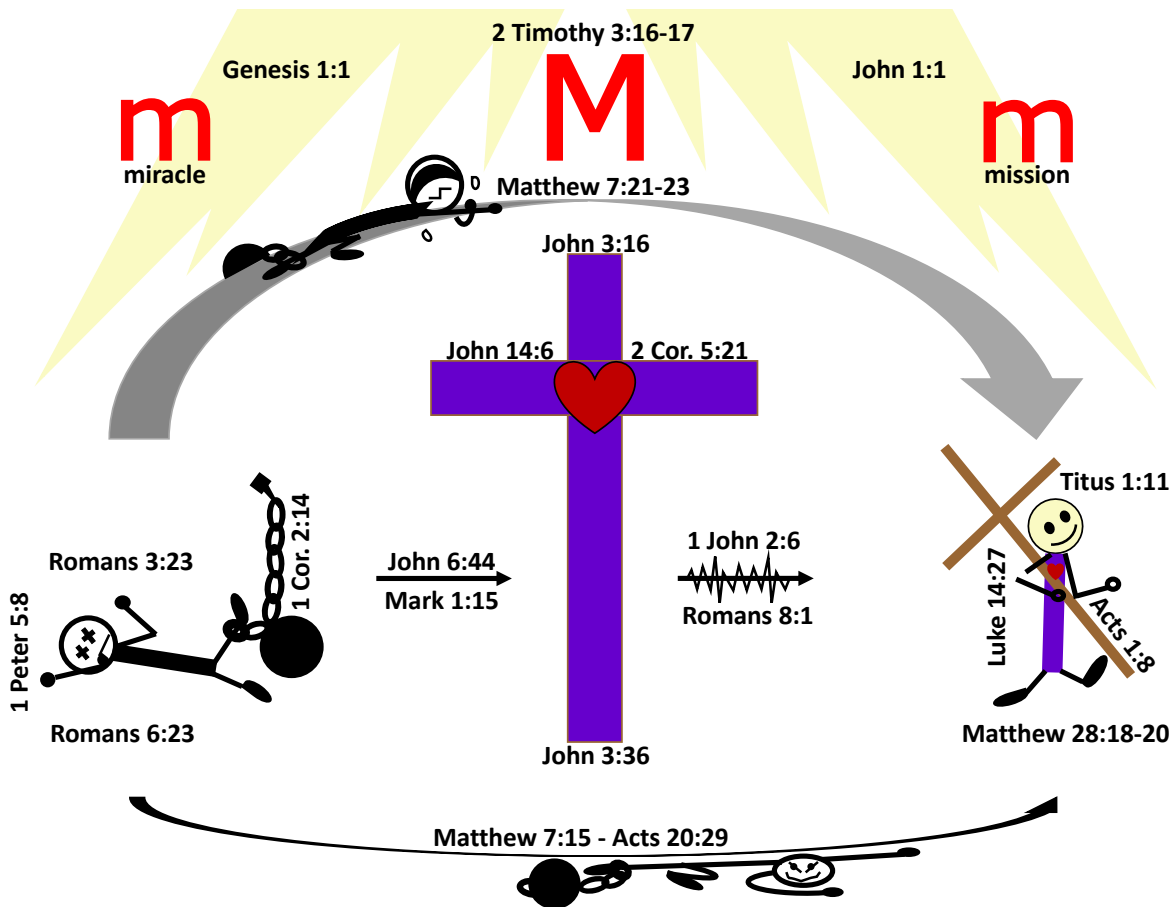
*The Spiritual Life is the gift of the Living Spirit. The spiritual man is no mere development of the Natural man.
He is a New Creation born from Above.*
- Henry Drummond

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17

We are the miracle of miracles,
 the great inscrutable mystery of God.
 - Thomas Carlyle

Application:

Use the Stickman Gospel diagram (below) and its corresponding Scripture verses to learn a simple, biblical, and missional explanation of the full context Gospel of Jesus Christ. Then, ask the Lord to show you where you fit in the diagram.



2. COMMISSION

Illustration:

It has long been observed that when a person “finds their fit” in life, their potential can hardly be imagined. At the same time, much can be gleaned from the opposite, sometimes tragic, situation as well. More to the point, few things generate greater frustration and perplexing disappointment than watching people ignore and/or squander their God-given potential.

When it comes to Christianity and BE-ing a new, born-again LOVER of God, finding one’s fit in God’s divine design has both a macro and a micro component – both of which are critical to identify and fulfill. Moreover, both bring to bear immeasurable potential. As we will see, every LOVER is called and commanded to join Jesus on His mission (Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:18-20), hence their macro “fit.” At the same time, never forget, every member of the family of God is also customized in their personal, micro calling and ministry.

Where do you fit in the divine design of Almighty God?

How fully are you fitting into your macro and micro fits?

Explanation:

1 Peter 2:1-2

***So** put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 2(**BE**) Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by **it** you may grow up into salvation*

1. **SO PURGE** all your old ways and learn to love and live like Christ!
2. **BE PASSIONATE** in your pursuits of God’s Word, will, and ways.
3. **IT** will **PURIFY** and help LOVERS to grow into their salvation.

Jesus was beyond clear when He commanded and commissioned His miraculous converts and faithful followers. LOVERS live on mission! Even better, LOVERS live CO-MISSIONED with, and are personally empowered by, the living Christ. LOVERS know, grow, and go in Him.

Matthew 28:18-20

18Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Acts 1:8

"But you will receive power when My Spirit comes on you, and you will BE My witnesses (locally, regionally, and globally), in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

John 20:21

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

Application:

Once "conversion" has taken place and the true, Christian LOVER is ready to live their new life, joining Jesus on His mission, there are 6 biblical directives that will help each child of God to please the Lord, as they press into His commands and COMMISSION for their lives.

1. Remember
2. Abide
3. Pray
4. Obey
5. Refine
6. Repeat

In the context of our LOVER lesson and 1 Peter 2:1-2...

So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 2(BE) Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation...

We can connect and apply our 6 COMMISSION directives this way:

1. **REMEMBER** all of the LOVER's descriptive details from 1 Peter chapter 1. Moreover, remember all that the Gospel explains and requires, to include the miracle, The Messiah, and the mission... plus John 15's defining and complete dependance upon the loving grace & mercy of the living God.
2. **ABIDE** in Christ (John 15:4), in large part, through your craving for His Word, will, and ways. Hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matthew 5:6), while seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33).
3. **PRAY** without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)... literally.
4. **OBEY** all the commands of Christ (Matthew 28:19) and in so doing, give evidence and witness to the fact that you truly love the Lord (John 14:15). By God's grace, put away all that is evil and sinful in your life, while faithfully following (Matthew 4:19) Jesus and serving as His missional ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:20), in all that you do (Colossians 3:23).
5. **REFINE** your worship, walk, work, warfare, and witness by remembering, abiding, and obeying the Lord (Philippians 2:12), all with a living hope (1 Peter 1:3) and reverent fear of the God of the Bible (1 Peter 1:17).
6. **REPEAT** the steps above all-day, every-day. Learn to love and live in this God-honoring way. Therein, by grace, you will find the narrow gate and stay on the narrow way (Matthew 7:13-14) of eternal life, all the while building your house on the Rock (Matthew 7:24-27) that is Christ.

I am no longer anxious about anything, as I realize the Lord is able to carry out His will, and His will is mine. It makes no matter where He places me, or how. That is rather for Him to consider than for me; for in the easiest positions, He must give me His grace, and in the most difficult, His grace is sufficient.

- Hudson Taylor

“Let us not glide through this world and then slip quietly into heaven, without having blown the trumpet loud and long for our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Let us see to it that the devil will hold a thanksgiving service in hell when he gets the news of our departure from the field of battle.”

— C.T. Studd

3. CONFIRMATION

Illustration:

Eternal life is not a peculiar feeling inside! It is not your ultimate destination, to which you will go when you are dead. If you are born again, eternal life is that quality of life that you possess right now.
- Major Ian Thomas

Explanation:

2 Peter 2:3
3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

“If” is a conditional and contextualizing word. What that means is that where and when God says “if,” He is declaring a contrast between two categories or outcomes. In the case of 1 Peter 2:3, “if” is a filter, connected to the test of having “tasted that the Lord is good.”

In short, those who have biblically tasted of the miraculous grace and goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ are genuine LOVERS. All others, regardless of how religious they are or how righteous their resumes appear to be, are still LOST – no exceptions.

While many moral people are in churches, few LOVERS are miraculously and missionally in Christ (Matthew 7:14). Do not be deceived! The Bible is filled with warning after warning of the dangers, deceptions, and destruction that come with false prophets, false teachers, false gospels, false converts, false churches, false hope.

Consequently, God and His Word repeatedly call for prayerful, heart-inspecting contemplation of one’s spiritual health. Why? Because God loves His children. To that end, LOVERS need to know that they are in fact biblical LOVERS of God – not like those described in Matthew 7:21-23 who will one day be shocked to hear Jesus say to them: “Get away from Me you evil doers, I NEVER knew you.”

With that said: remember that the LOVERS “confirmation” is NOT found in their goodness but in God’s grace; NOT in their perfection but in their passion; NOT in their mechanicals but in Christ’s miracles; NOT in their rigors or religion but in their redemptive relationship with Christ.

Application:

2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

John 15:8

By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples.

REVIEW: **The LOVERS are spiritually SAVED sinners!**

CLOSE:

Remember... we are all what God and His Word say we are – like it or not! If we are not yet a miraculously “found” LOVER of God, we are still LOST. BUT once we are “found” and blessed to BE, by God’s grace and for God’s glory, a saved LOVER of Christ, we have a guaranteed “inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven” (1 Peter 1:4).

Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace.

- Jerry Bridges

The future is as bright as the promises of God.

- William Carey

Grace grows best in winter.

- Samuel Rutherford

For What?

Worship is why we are born and why we are born again.

A.W. Tozer

Recognizing the difference between the religious LOST and the new, born-again LOVER can be very difficult to distinguish and discern on the surface, even for the most mature Christians. For this reason (and more), helping people to see, understand, and accept the Bible's definitions of Christ's Gospel and a person's spiritual condition (and relative growth) is essential for effective discipleship.

BE-ing born-again purges, purifies, and gives purpose to the LOVER's past, present, and future!

So What?

We have suffered from the preaching of cheap grace. Grace is free, but it is not cheap. People will take anything that is free, but they are not interested in discipleship. They will take Christ as Savior but not as Lord.

- Vance Havner

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession.

Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ.

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Grace is not simply leniency when we have sinned. Grace is the enabling gift of God not to sin. Grace is power, not just pardon.

- John Piper

Now What?

Go! BE a biblical LOVER... and BE a BRIDGE family Manifesto-missionary!



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 disciples-warriors & winning spiritual-warfare...
- 12.** Loving our King & serving His kingdom!

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:

"So, BE, It... If"

1 Peter 2:1-3

July 2, 2023

Sermon Series: No Matter What!