

Men's Retreat Outline:

Retreat Theme verse: Ephesians 2:10:

¹⁰For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." (NLT)

¹⁰For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (NIV)

¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (ESV)

Session 1: "For we" Theme: "One-anothering"

We are in this together. We men frequently forget that "no man is an island," and we far too often try to go it alone. The Bible is clear that there are no "Lone Ranger Christians," and that we are already connected to each other through Christ. We already are the "Body of Christ," connected together by our common faith in Jesus, but we need to choose to live out this reality by intentionally choosing to obey God's Word and live like we are connected.

We need to intentionally put aside our individualistic and independent tendencies, intentionally build links to each other, and follow the commands of scripture to be there for one another. We then will truly experience the Christian community that God intends His sons to live within.

* Resource 1 – "One-anothering" verses in the NT handout

In this session we will only focus on four, but the rest are worthy of later reflection.

- A. "Love one another" (John 13:34-35)
- B. "Accept one another" (Rom. 15:7)
- C. "Forgive one another" (Col. 3:13)
- D. "Encourage one another" (Heb. 3:13)

Session 2: “For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus”

Theme: “Saved by grace.... But also sustained and secured by grace.”

Many of us Christian men struggle to understand/remember the reality that in Christ, we “ARE” already declared by God to be His best workmanship, His masterpiece. We are through Christ alone created anew, and declared by God to be forgiven and free, sons of God. This is our new identity. Nothing we can do can change this identity, as God has already secured it. We cannot earn more of God’s favor by anything we do, nor can we lose His designation of us as His best work. He views us through the lens of Jesus, and thus, we are already God’s masterpiece. (We serve, worship, and do good works, but as responses to God’s saving, sustaining, and securing grace ONLY.) Eph. 2:10, Rom. 12:1-2)

But, before we try to live out that calling, it’s important to remember the vital role that grace plays, not just in saving us, but how God’s grace sustains and secures us. Some of us understand that we are “saved by grace,” but we forget that God’s grace is what carries us through every day. We do not need to do it ourselves, or try to go it alone, God will work through His grace.

Scriptures: Eph. 2:1-10, Gal. 2:20, 1 Cor. 5:21, Rom. 12:1-2

*Resources 2: “Grace” Eph. 2 & Rom. 12 handout, & “Amazing Grace” verse-by-verse handout.

Session 3: “For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus”

Theme: Living as God’s best work and what prevents us from doing so.

We are to live as those saved, sustained, secured by God’s grace and declared to be His best work, right? Then why is that so difficult to do? We must choose to live lives that are worthy of that calling, but what prevents us from doing that?

While God has already declared us through Jesus to be “His best work,” (masterpiece,) the reality is that we don’t always agree or live like that is the truth. Each of us still has a sin nature that still pulls us away from Our Lord. We must remember that while our sin is still part of our present reality, sin has no power over us unless we give it power. We must choose to live by the Spirit, and not by our sinful nature, as characterized by our old sinful ways. When we give in to the old sinful ways, the reality/perception of our new identity in Christ fades, and we begin to struggle, doubt, and deal with much inner-conflict.

Scriptures: Galatians 5:16-26, Eph. 4:21-24

* Resource 3: “Living by the Spirit” handout

Session 4: “so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”

Theme: Serve to Significance

We men are creative and active. Whether we work with “manly tools” found in the garage, workshop, shed, or at Home Depot, or with a computer, camera, grill or guitar; we create. Whether we walk, run, bike, hike, hunt, fish, camp, cook, golf, pray, teach, or charge through our workday; we are active. In this reality we reflect the image of God; who is eternally creative and active.

Once we fully understand and work to remember that we are already God’s masterpiece, (nothing we do or don’t do will change that,) and then from that position of security and strength we can and MUST serve. In Christ, God values us highly.

This reality should challenge us to be active and work from this security of being valued highly to make a significant difference. By serving as God directs, and by being active in doing the good works that God has planned, we will find true significance.

We Christian men need to move beyond mere success in life, to find significance. By serving God and others, using our spiritual gifts that God has provided, we find true significance.

Scripture: Romans 12 (especially 12:1-8) James 2:14-26

*Resource 4: Romans 12 handout

Session 1:

The One-Another's and Each-Other's of the NT

John 13:14

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.

John 13:34

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

John 13:35

By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Romans 12:10

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Romans 12:16

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Romans 13:8

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

Romans 14:13

Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.

Romans 15:7

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Romans 15:14

I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.

Romans 16:16 (also 1 Cor. 16:20, 2 Cor. 13:12)

Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings.

1 Corinthians 1:10

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

Galatians 5:13

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

Galatians 6:2

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Ephesians 4:2

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 5:19

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,

Ephesians 5:21

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Colossians 3:13

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Colossians 3:9

Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices

1 Thessalonians 4:9

Now about loving one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:13

Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

1 Thessalonians 5:15

Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.

Hebrews 3:13

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

Hebrews 10:24

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Hebrews 10:25

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

James 4:11

Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.

James 5:16

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

James 5:9

Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

1 Peter 3:8

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

1 Peter 4:8

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4:9

Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

1 Peter 5:5

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

1 John 3:11

This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

1 John 3:23

And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

1 John 4:7

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:11

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

1 John 4:12

No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Ephesians 2:1-10

Helpful Background for the Passage

1. The term, “dead,” (2:1) means “complete absence of life.” Something that is “dead” is unable to respond, unable to live, and unable to “do” much of anything. A dead thing is unable to initiate any contact, and will not have an independent response to any external prompting.
2. The word, “transgressions,” (2:1, 5) means “stepping out of the boundaries.” God sets up the playing field, and we step out of bounds, thus breaking the rules. We intentionally cross the boundary fences that God sets up to protect us, and go into areas where we were never meant to go. These transgressions lead us into harmful, dangerous, enslaving, areas, that are “out of bounds” in the world that God designed.
3. A sin (1:1) is “missing the mark.” God has a standard, and we do not live up to it. God has a target, and we cannot hit it. We fall short of God’s holiness because of sin, and cannot meet his perfect standards.
4. Paul makes it clear that “all have sinned,” (Rom. 3:23) in chapter 2:1-3. He first explains that the Ephesians, former Gentiles and Jews, were all “dead” in their sin. Then, he confirms, that at one time, all other believers, apostles, disciples, Jews, and all, were also “dead.” (2:3) All had been “objects of wrath,” or under the intense anger of God Almighty, the Holy One.
5. To be “Alive,” (2:5) means the “presence of life.” Something that is alive will respond, will change, and can grow. It may move, reproduce, and will respond to external prompting.
6. In 2:5-6, the verbs translated, “made us alive,” “raised,” and “seated” are in a Greek verb tense called, aorist. These verbs, in this tense, indicate what God has already done for His children in Christ. They indicate a past, completed action, even if we cannot “see” or “understand” that reality with our limited minds.
7. The word translated “incomparable,” (1:19, 2:7) means supreme, exceeding, ultimate, or unsurpassed. In verse 1:19, it describes the supreme act of God’s power, raising Christ from the dead. In verse 2:7, it describes the supreme act of God’s grace, first our salvation, but even more so, our status, “raised and seated with Christ.” We know from other scriptures that the supreme act of God’s love was His only son going to the cross in our place.
8. In Ephesians 2:8-9, we have three of the key truths of Evangelical Christianity. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, and to the Glory of God alone. Only God’s grace can save us, and only through the gift of faith and grace can we respond to this free gift.

9. The word translated “handiwork/workmanship/masterpiece” (2:10) mean “a master craftsman/artist best work.” It’s the ”highest accomplishment” of one who is creative and gifted. It is a term that refers usually, to artwork, literature, paintings, and other beautiful created things. In Christ, God has done some of his best creating, or re-creating, in each one of us.

Review Questions

1. (2:1-2) What does “dead in your transgressions and sins” mean? How did we end up “dead?” What does it mean to be spiritually “dead?”

2. (2:3) Who was dead? What was our status, in relation to God, when we were “dead in sin?”

3. (2:4-5) What did God do, when we were “dead in sin?” What was His motivation? Did we do anything? What did God do?

4. (2:6-7) Did God quit after he “made us alive?” What else did God do? Why did he act? (What verb tense is used, and why is this worth noting?)

5. (2:8-9) How are we saved? How does the saving happen, specifically? Why is it “not from yourselves?”

6. (2:10) Once we have been saved and sustained by God’s grace, how does He view us? What does God declare us to be? For what reason are we “created in Christ?”

SO WHAT?

7. Do you remember a time when you were unresponsive to God, and “dead in sin?” Do you remember being “made alive in Christ?” How should you act/think/live, since you are “made alive in Christ?”

8. According to this passage, if you follow Jesus as your only Lord and Savior, you are, in God’s eyes, alive, saved, raised with Christ, and seated with Jesus. You did not earn this status, it was a gift to you. How then should we live? How should this truth impact our daily lives?

9. You are also God’s masterpiece, created in Christ to do great things. How do you respond? How do you think and feel as a result of this amazing truth? Does it make a difference?

Session 2: Amazing Grace (“Faith’s Review and Expectation”)

Words by: John Newton, Olney Hymns (London: W. Oliver, 1779) Exception: the last stanza is by an unknown author, it appeared as early as 1829 in the Baptist Songster, by R. Winchell as the last stanza of the song “Jerusalem My Happy Home”.

Music: “New Britain”, in Virginia Harmony by James P. Carrell and David S. Clayton (Winchester, VA:1831)

John Newton: 1725-1807

Nearing his death, some of his Last words: “my memory is nearly gone; but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Savior”.

Chronicles 17: 16-17

The song:

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound

that saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found

was blind, but now I see.

‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,

And grace my fears relieved;

How precious did that grace appear

The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,

I have already come,

‘tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,

and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures,
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine,
But God who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

Session 3: Living by the Spirit

Galatians 5:16-26 (NLT)

¹⁶ So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. ¹⁷ The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. ¹⁸ But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses. ¹⁹ When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. ²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. ²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.

Helpful Background for the Passage

1. Paul teaches that living out the Christian life is an internal battle between the "sinful nature" and the "Spirit." (5:16-17) The "sinful nature" is that part of us that desires all the wrong things. It desires to pull us away from God, and towards our selfish selves. The sin nature has been crucified, killed, and declared to have no power over us, (Gal. 2:20) but yet we allow it to influence us. The Spirit is in us to make us new, and to draw us towards God. If we yield ourselves to the Spirit, and then choose to walk in step with the Spirit, we will produce good fruit, through no efforts of our own.

2. The phrase "live by the Spirit," (pneumatiperipateite) Conveys the meaning of the literal translation "by the Spirit keep on walking." The phrase indicates a moment by moment contact with the Holy Spirit as we navigate our way through our daily life/walk. If we live with the Holy Spirit as our guide, then we will be "checking in" consistently through prayer and time in the Word to seek help. (The tense of the word is present, continuous action.)

3. Paul speaks of the internal struggle for control between the sinful nature and the Spirit, as a battle between exact opposites. But this is not a battle of equals, as the sin nature ONLY has the power that we give back to it. The Spirit's power is unlimited, but the amount of power available to us depends on our choices as well. (5:17) The struggle is so intense, that at times, we do not do, what we want to do. (See also, Rom. 6-7) We have the power to choose right, but sometimes, even though we know what we want to choose, we do not take the right path. The Bible always promises us a way out of temptation, but we don't always take it. Even though we know we should, we do not always yield to the Spirit, and take the escape route.

(See 1 Cor. 10:13)

4. When battling the sinful nature, we must be intentional and honest with ourselves. We must admit that we have a sinful nature, as some would prefer to deny its existence. (Jer. 17:9) We must then surrender that selfish, sinful nature to Christ. (Gal. 2:20) Then, we must commit our actions, thoughts, and attitudes to God, and try to follow Christ. (Luke (9:23-25) Make loving and serving others a priority.

5. Listed for us in this passage, are some of the "acts" of the sinful nature. (5:19-21) Paul is careful to call these behaviors "acts," to demonstrate that they are actions, that result from our choices. The list is not intended to be a complete list, but it does provide us with an overview of the differing types of sins. The list includes four categories of sin, including:

- sexual sin, (sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, orgies/wild parties,)
- idolatry, (witchcraft, idolatry)
- sins of strife, (hatred, discord, jealousy, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy)
- sins of excess, (drunkenness, fits of rage...)

6. The term "fruit," (5:22-23) refers to the evidence of life that comes from a living thing. The term here, is a singular term. This indicates the unity that is present, because all fruit, no matter how it is expressed, comes from the same source, the Spirit. If the fruit is expressed as love, or gentleness, it all comes from the Spirit, through us.

7. The power of our sin nature was broken when we trusted in Jesus. His death on the cross made it possible for us to resist sin, as it has no power over us. When we yield to our sin nature, we are giving it power it does not have to control us. In many ways, our sinful selfish desires (nature) may need to be put to death every day, to remind us that it has no power.

Review Questions

1. (5:16) How should we live? What does it mean to “live by the Spirit?” What does “gratify” mean, and why won’t we gratify our sinful nature?

2. (5:17-18) What’s the relationship between the sinful nature and the Spirit? What does the sinful nature desire? What does the Spirit desire? What happens in us as a result? By what are we “led?”

3. (5:19) What is an “act,” and how is this definition related to the sinful nature? Why are they “obvious?” What are the “acts” mentioned in this verse?

4. (5:20-21) What “acts” are mentioned in this continuing list? What is the common cause of all of these “acts,” and what’s the common root sin? With what warning does Paul end the list? Define: “those who live like this...” (5:21)

5. (5:22-23) What is “fruit,” and how is this definition related to the Spirit? How is fruit produced? Describe the “fruit” mentioned in these verses? What is the common cause of this “fruit,” and what is the common root quality?

6. (5:24) For those who belong to Christ, what has been done to the sinful nature? How has this been done to the sinful nature? How does this practically, happen?

7. (5:25-26) What does it mean to “live by the Spirit?” What does “keep in step,” mean, and how do we specifically, live this way? What must we guard against, in regards to each other? (5:26) Why?

SO WHAT?

8. What is the difference between an “act,” and a “fruit?” Is there a difference in your life now, compared to before you were walking with Christ?

9. How is “spiritual fruit” produced? What fruit is evident in your life today?

10. Are you living by the Spirit? How are you “in step with the Spirit?” What throws you out of step?

Session 4: Living the Life

Romans 12:1-8

Helpful Background for the Passage

1. In the first 11 chapters of Romans, Paul has summed up the reality that all have sinned, but that God had a plan to deal with that sin, in Christ Jesus. God chose to have mercy upon “all” who sinned, through the grace that is extended in Christ. (11:32) Now, in chapter 12, Paul will begin teaching how truth, transforms into action. How do we now live, as those saved and sustained by grace; to live as living sacrifices, in the interdependent body of Christ.

2. The phrase, “in view of God’s mercy,” (12:1) sums up the first 11 chapters of Romans, and calls us to respond. The word translated “mercy,” [oiktirmon] is literally, “compassions, mercies,” and refers to everything that God has done, in relation to us. So, because of all that God has done, how should we respond?

3. Our selves are all that we have to offer to God. (Our “bodies,” which include the mind, will, emotions, and actions, are what we have to offer as a living sacrifice.) We are called to offer, give, yield, ourselves to God’s purposes, plans, and pleasures. It is clear throughout scripture, that God desires faithful obedience, which may be expressed through sacrifice. (1 Sam. 15:22, Ps. 40:6, Am. 5:21-24, Heb.) God desires us to be “living sacrifices,” daily setting aside our desires, to follow Him. (Heb. 13:15-16)

4. The Greek word for “Worship,” [latreian] (12:1-2) as used here, refers to any act done for God. The concept of worship, as just singing, or listening to music, is far too narrow. Worship is any act, public or private, formal or informal, that is done “as unto the Lord.” If performing the action, thinking the thought, or choosing the right choice is done “as unto the Lord,” it is worship. If your attitude seeks the glory of God, then whatever you do may be an act of worship.

5. The word translated, “spiritual,” [logiken] can better be translated, “reasonable.” To serve God, totally, is the only logical, reasonable, response to what God has done for us. When one truly understands the depth of the love of God, His compassion, and His mercy, the reasonable response is to live as a living sacrifice. “He died for me, I will live for Him.”

6. When a follower of Christ truly offers themselves fully to God, a change of lifestyle will occur. Believers must not “conform,” or match, the ways of the world. We must grow into being salt and light, in a dying and dark world.

7. The word translated, “transformed,” (12:2) is the Greek word, [metamorphousthe] from which we get “metamorphosis.” Believers are to experience a complete change, from the inside out. The change begins in the mind, and is carried through the whole person. (All actions/attitudes begin as thoughts.) God renews our minds, through His Word, His Spirit, and His Church. Just as God works the miracle of grace; transforming a sinner into a saint, He works the miracle of renewing; (sanctifying) a corrupted caterpillar into a glorified butterfly.

8. Our opinions of ourselves need to be in line with God’s view of us. We must not be spiritually prideful, nor must we be too down on ourselves. “neither an inflated ego, nor a deflated person, is free to faithfully, joyfully, obey.” God has given each believer a “measure of faith,” in order to serve Him. This measure refers to the capacity and/or power, to carry out a function of faith in life and in the Church.)See 12:6, different gifts, according to God’s purposes...)

9. The gifts and roles mentioned in Romans 12, fall into two categories; speaking and serving. This list, along with the list mentioned in 1 Cor., is not meant to be a complete list, but rather a starting point of how God has equipped the Church. Most of the gifts are obvious to understand, but some may cause some confusion. “Prophecy,” in the NT, is not always predicting the future. Often it is “effectively communicating God’s truth,”)1 Cor. 14:1-3) to the Church. The way Paul speaks of the gifts, indicates the truth that they exist to build up and grow the Church. They are not for “having,” but for “using” for God’s purposes.

10. The gifts listed here are for the benefit of the individual believers, but even more so for the Church. No one believer has all of the gifts, and all are necessary parts of the body. A Church, like a body, needs all of its parts to be working, in order for the whole to be healthy.

* “The problem with a living sacrifice, is that, it keeps crawling off of the altar.”

Review Questions

1. (12:1) What's the "therefore," there for? To what are we called? Why? What is our response to be?

2. (12:2) What are we not to do? Why?

3. (12:3) How should we "not think of ourselves?" How should we think of ourselves?

4. (12:4-5) Who/what are we? How are we one, yet many? What analogy does Paul use to explain this reality? (Also, 1 Cor. 12:12-27) Why does the body exist?

5. (12:6-8) What's the purpose of the "gifts" mentioned? What is the conditional, "if, then," sequence Paul teaches? How should we respond to "the gifts" God has given?

SO WHAT?

7. How do we practically, specifically, live as “living sacrifices?” How do we avoid “conforming to the ways of the world,” and how are we “transformed?”

8. How do you “think” of yourself? Do you struggle with an inflated ego, or a deflated self-image? How have you understood your self image in the past? What does God say about you? (Eph. 2:10)

9. How can we identify our spiritual gifts? How can we put them into use? How does this work? Does every one have them?

Discussion Questions

Session 1: "one-Anothering"

1. (John 13:34-35, Heb. 3:13) How are you intentionally following Jesus' command to "love one another" in your daily life? How does this daily choice make a difference? Who are you encouraging in the way that is described in Heb. 3:13? How is this also loving them?

2. (Rom. 15:7) How have you experienced being "accepted" by Jesus Christ? How then, do you practice accepting others? How does this bring glory to God?

3. (Col. 3:13) Who do you need to forgive? How is forgiveness possible for you to do JUST with God's help alone? Why is forgiveness a good idea?

Session 2:

4. (Eph. 2:1-9) Do you remember being unresponsive to God before you became a Christian? (Dead in your sin.) What changed? If you don't recall a time when you were without Jesus, (Praise God!) but have there been times when you drifted away from God? What brought you back to Him?

5. How does grace need to continue to be a part of our daily spiritual lives? How does God already view us through Christ? How can grace help us?

6. (Rom. 12:1-2) What is our reasonable response to all God has done and has given us? What should we do? What then happens?

Session 3:

7. God view's you through/in Christ, and declares you to be His "masterpiece" or His best creative work. Your response? How can this reality power our lives and self-image? Do you believe it?

8. So, what prevents you from living up to that high calling? How does your sin nature still influence your choices? In what areas are you giving your sin nature power to pull you in a bad direction? What specific sin struggle still is present in your life?

9. How do you understand the role of the Holy Spirit in your life? How is or isn't the Spirit your guide? What "fruit" is in your life?