

## Practice of Godliness

### Ch. 1 – Value for All Things

#### Fighter Verse: 2 Chronicles 16:9

*Recite fighter verse together – what does this verse mean for us?*

#### Value for All Things

**Main Theme 1:** It is the privilege and duty of every Christian to pursue godliness.

Discuss what godliness means to you. What is it? What are marks of a godly person? How does a person become godly? What do you think of when you think of godliness?

**Main Theme 2:** The practice of godliness is being focused on and devoted to God.

Discuss what it means to be focused on and devoted to God. What things do we do? What things do we think about? What areas of our life are affected and how? How do we grow in focusing more on God and being more devoted to God? What has to happen first before we can be devoted to God?

1 Corinthians 10:31 “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

**Main Theme 3:** Godliness is “devotion to God that results in a life that is pleasing to Him”.

Discuss what it means to please God. What pleases God? How do we do it? Can we please God on our own and why/why not? What areas of our life can we do this and how? What do thoughts and actions look like that please God? How do we please God more and more in our lives? What has to happen before we can please God?

#### Next week's fighter verse

*Philippians 3:7-8 “Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.”*

Discuss how this verse relates to godliness. How does this verse portray being devoted to God? What does it mean to please God in this verse? Why does Paul say we should be so devoted to God that we count everything else as rubbish?

Discuss what the different terms in this verse mean. What does surpassing mean? What does rubbish mean? What is “whatever gain I had” talking about? What does it mean to “count as loss” or “count as rubbish”? What does it mean that Paul suffered the loss of all things, what did he lose? What does it mean to “know Christ Jesus my Lord”? What does it mean to “gain Christ”?

## Practice of Godliness

### Ch. 2 – Devotion to God - Part 1: Fear of God

#### Fighter Verse: Philippians 3:10-11

*Recite fighter verse together – what does this verse mean for us?*

#### Devotion to God

**Main Theme 1:** (Why is devotion to God important?) It is impossible to build a Christian behavior pattern without the foundation of a devotion to God.

Discuss what devotion to God means to you. What is devotion? What is devotion to God? What are marks of a person devoted to God? What do they do/say/think? How does a person become devoted to God? Why does devotion to God have to come before Christian behavior? Can we fake devotion to God? If so, what might this look like?

**Main Theme 2:** It is impossible to be devoted to God if one's heart is not filled with the fear of God.

Before reading the chapter, what did you think it meant to fear God?

Discuss what the fear of God is. What are the 2 ways of fearing God (pg. 9.3)? Which way are Christians supposed to fear God and which way are they not supposed to fear God? What aspects of God do we fear? What happens in our lives as a result of fearing God? Why do we need to fear God in order to be devoted to him?

What does the proper fear of God lead us to do in each of these verses? Why does fearing God lead to that result?

- Exodus 14:31 "Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord."
- Deuteronomy 6:2 "[You shall] fear the Lord your God . . . by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life"
- Proverbs 1:7 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."
- Proverbs 8:13 "The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil."
- Jeremiah 32:40 "I [God] will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me."
- Revelation 15:4 "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name?"
- "What or whom we worship determines our behavior."
  - How is fearing God related to worship? How do our lives show what we worship?
  - What are some things we could be tempted to worship? What might it look like to worship these things?
- We must have fear of God in order to be devoted to God, and we must be devoted to God in order to obey him. Heart change comes before behavior change.
  - How do we grow in our capacity to fear and be devoted to God?

Next week's fighter verse 1 Corinthians 1:18 *"the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."*

Discuss how the power of God relates to the fear of God. What is the power of God in this verse? How should the power of God make us feel? How important is the word of the cross in this verse? What does it mean that we are "being saved"?

## Practice of Godliness

### Ch. 2 – Devotion to God - Part 2: Love and Desire for God

#### Fighter Verse: 1 Corinthians 1:18

*Recite fighter verse together – what does this verse mean for us?*

#### Love and Desire for God

**Main Theme 1:** Being aware of how amazing God's love for us is enables devotion to him.

Discuss what the love of God is, then answer the following.

- How is his love for us primarily demonstrated (Romans 5:8)? Why was this loving?
- Do we deserve the love of God and why or why not?
- Why does having a reverent fear of God lead to us loving him more? (Leading question: what did Jesus leave when he came to earth?)
- How is God's love for believers different than for the rest of the world? (How is John 3:16 love different than 1 John 3:1-2 love?)
- What does His love solely depend upon (17.2)? Why does this give us confidence (Romans 8:38-39)?
- How does the realization of God's love for us change how we act (1 John 4:19)?
- What are some ways we show that we are not thinking about God's love in our actions? What are some ways we show that we are thinking about it?

**Main Theme 2:** Godliness produces a desire for God himself.

Discuss what it means to desire God himself (versus desiring things God gives us), then answer the following.

- What does it mean to desire God? Why do we want to? How do we cultivate that desire?
- Is desiring knowledge of God the same as desiring God himself? (James 2:19 – does knowledge save anyone?)
- Everyone, Christian or not desires heaven, freedom from pain, no guilt, no shame, no hell, no punishment, but Christians desire God himself more than these things. How should we view these other things in respect to God?

What words do the following verses use to describe our desire for God himself? Think about things in your life that we desire in the same way as in these verses (for example, what do we thirst for?). What would it mean for us to feel that way about God?

- Psalm 42:1-2 "As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God."
- Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness"
- Psalm 119:10 "With my whole heart I seek you"
- Isaiah 26:9 "My soul yearns for you in the night; my spirit within me earnestly seeks you."
- Psalm 84:2 "My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God."

**"The fear of God and apprehension of God's love for us produce within our souls an intense desire for Him who is so awesome in His glory and majesty and yet so condescending in His love and mercy."**

Next week's fighter verse

Psalms 37:[1-2] 3-4

<sup>1</sup> [Fret not yourself because of evildoers;

be not envious of wrongdoers!

<sup>2</sup> For they will soon fade like the grass

and wither like the green herb.]

<sup>3</sup> Trust in the LORD, and do good;

dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.

<sup>4</sup> Delight yourself in the LORD,

and he will give you the desires of your heart.

What are we called to do in this passage? What does God promise to do? What meanings could “the desires of your heart” have?

Discuss how this passage relates to the love of God. How does God demonstrate his love for us in this passage?

Discuss how this passage relates to our desire for God. What word does this passage use to describe our desire for God? How does our life look different when we view God this way?

## Practice of Godliness

### Ch. 3 – Train Yourself to be Godly - Part 1: Principles for Training

#### Fighter Verse: Psalm 37:23-24

*Recite fighter verse together – what does this verse mean for us?*

#### Train Yourself to be Godly

Why do we care about being godly?

- What has to happen in our hearts first before we can make progress in godliness?
- What did Christ do for us that makes us want to obey him?

Everyone think of a time when you trained for something.

- What did you do to train?
- When you stopped training, what happened or what would happen if you stopped?

#### Principles for Training

##### 1. Personal Responsibility

- Christianity is about having a relationship with God, which means we have to work at it. We don't get it by osmosis from somebody else.
- What kind of things are we responsible for?

##### 2. The Object of Training is Growth

- The object of training is NOT to follow a list of rules better. The object is to grow in our relationship with God and walk in more and more obedience.
- Everyone think of an example of something that will get better as we train in godliness.

##### 3. There are 3 things we must have

###### 1. Commitment

- Why would we want to commit ourselves to God?
- Where should God rank on our list of commitments?

###### 2. The Holy Spirit through the Bible

- Where do we go to get the Holy Spirit's help?
- What kind of things does the Holy Spirit do in us?

###### 3. Practice

- What kind of things do we practice in regards to godliness?

Everyone name one area of their lives that they want to train more in godliness.

- What will it take to do that?

#### Next week's fighter verse

Hebrews 12:1

*"Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us"*

Hebrews 12:1 uses the analogy of physical training for our lives as well when it calls our lives a race.

- What are we to lay aside in our lives? Is it just sin?
- What are weights like, what do they do, and what are some examples of weights in our lives (keep in mind these are not sins)?

We are to lay aside anything that hinders our walk with God: NOT JUST SINS.

## Practice of Godliness

### Ch. 3 – Train Yourself to be Godly - Part 2: The Word of God

#### Fighter Verse: Hebrews 12:1

*Recite fighter verse together – what does this verse mean for us?*

#### The Word of God

##### 5 Methods of Bible Intake

##### **1. Hearing**

- What are some examples of things we listen to in order to be entertained? This is not the purpose of listening to teaching about the Word of God.
- What is the purpose of listening to teaching about the Word of God?
- What are some different ways we hear teaching about the Bible?

##### **2. Reading**

- Who are some people that you listen to when they talk? How important is it to your relationship that you listen to them?
- God has spoken to us and is speaking to us through his Word. How do we listen to God?
- What are some reasons for reading the word of God?

##### **3. Studying**

- What is an example of something each person has learned by studying (outside of the Bible)? Why does studying help?
- Reading gives us breadth, studying gives us \_\_\_\_\_. (32.3)
- We always find time for \_\_\_\_\_. (34.1)
- What are some ideas you have for studying the Bible?
- Characteristics for Bible study - Questions to ask yourself
  1. Ready to learn - are you expecting God to teach you something?
  2. Intent on obeying - are you ready to change in order to obey God?
  3. Mentally disciplined - are you thinking hard about what you are studying?
  4. Prayerful - are you praying that God would show you something?
  5. Persevering - do you give up easily?

##### **4. Memorizing**

- What is an example of something each person has learned by memorizing (outside of the Bible)? Why does memorizing help?
- How does memorizing God's word help us?

##### **5. Meditating**

- What does it mean to meditate? (35.1)
- \_\_\_\_\_ is the first step to meditation. (35.2) Why is this the case?

What are some examples of each of the five methods of Bible intake being done?

Pleasing God requires knowing His will - how he wants us to live and what he wants us to do. \_\_\_\_\_ is the ONLY means by which He communicates that will to us. (36.1)

#### Next week's fighter verse

Hebrews 12:2

*"looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."*

## Practice of Godliness

### Ch. 4 – Seeking a Deeper Devotion - Part 1: Fellowship with God

#### Fighter Verse: Psalm 96:4-5

*Recite fighter verse together – what does this verse mean for us?*

#### Seeking a Deeper Devotion

What is devotion?

- Everyone name something in their lives that they are devoted to (besides God things).
- What kind of things do you do to demonstrate that devotion?
- So what kind of things might we do that show devotion to God?

Developing a deeper devotion to God involves growing in our understanding of the love of God, the fear of God, and the desire for God (remember the triangle).

- Everyone name something in their lives that they have wanted to grow in understanding (besides God things).
- What kind of things did you do to help your understanding?
- So what kind of things might we do to grow in our understanding of the characteristics of God?

**Main Theme:** Growing in our understanding of the characteristics of God requires fellowship with God.

What is fellowship?

- What kinds of people do we have fellowship with?
- What does fellowship look like with these people? (i.e. what things do we do, what things do we talk about, etc.)
- So what kind of things might we do to have fellowship with God?

#### Fellowship with God involves 3 things

1. Praying for Growth
  - What is prayer? Why is prayer important for our fellowship with God?
2. Meditating on God
  - What is meditation? Why is meditation important for our fellowship with God?
3. Worshipping God
  - What is worship? Why is worship important for our fellowship with God?

Everyone name one area of their lives that we discussed that they want to grow in.

- What will it take to do that?

#### Next week's fighter verse

Psalm 96:6-8

*"Splendor and majesty are before him; Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength! Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts!"*

What is something that sticks out to you from this passage? What does this passage say about God? How should this passage impact our daily lives?

## Practice of Godliness

### Ch. 4 – Seeking a Deeper Devotion - Part 2: Obedience to God

#### Fighter Verse: Psalm 96:6-8

*Recite fighter verse together – what does this verse mean for us?*

#### Review

Christianity is a relationship with God.

- Relationships require at least these 3 things.

1. Talking. - How do we talk to God? Why is talking important in a relationship? What types of things do you talk to friends about? (Requests only? Would God want that?) Do people you know just want to hear you say the same things over and over again? Then why would God?
2. Listening. - How does God talk to us? Why is listening important in a relationship? Do people you know want you to just hear what they say and then forget it or act like they never hear it? Then why would God?
3. Recognizing the authority structure. - How would our relationship with our parents or our bosses go if we thought we had equal authority as them? It is the same with God. Worship is primarily (though also through prayer) how we demonstrate our recognition of the enormous gap between God and us in all things.

- Relationships die if we just try to meet demands.

- For example, if you wanted someone to make you a sandwich every day and they came to your house at exactly the same time every day and made the exact same sandwich every day for you because they knew that's what you wanted but did nothing else (no talking, no listening, no relating, no thinking about you), what kind of relationship would you have? Why?

- They would be a pretty good rule follower but a terrible friend, and you would have no relationship > It is the same with God.

- God doesn't want us simply to do a bunch of things just because we think he wants us to. He wants us to have a relationship with him. What would it look like have a relationship with God? What are some things that people might do just to "check it off the list" they think God has for them? What kind of relationship do you think makes God happy? Would that make us happy too? (God wants it for our good)

#### Obedience to God

- The fear of God and the love of God that we develop when we have a *relationship* with God motivate us to OBEDIENCE. What are we being obedient to? God's Word.

**Main Point: Our relationship with God motivates us to obey Him.**

- Since obedience springs from our relationship with God, where should we look to improve when we have struggles with sin and disobedience in our lives? Do we look to ourselves to try and fix it? How do we improve upon our relationship with God?

- Obedience proves that fear and love for God are authentic. Read James 2:14-17 together (which Pastor Brandon preached on last week). Why do the fear and love for God (faith) always lead to obedience (works)?

- Godliness is God-centeredness and God-likeness. What do these two words mean? (p. 46)

- Everyone think of a specific plan they can make to grow in their devotion to God/relationship with God.

**REMINDER: Complete the 3 R's worksheet on Philippians 3:7-11 for next week.**

Next week's fighter verse

Psalm 96:9-10

*"Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth! Say among the nations, 'The Lord reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.'"*

What is something that sticks out to you from this passage? What does this passage say about God? How should this passage impact our daily lives?



## Practice of Godliness

### Ch. 5 – Taking on God’s Character - Part 1

#### Fighter Verse: Romans 12:9-10

*Recite fighter verse – what does this verse mean for us?*

**1. Clothe Yourselfs** - Colossians 3:12 says to “clothe ourselves” with godly characteristics.

- Everyone give 1 description of what clothes are like (what they do, etc.). How do the qualities of clothes relate to qualities of our character?

**2. The Right Motive**

- Everyone name one thing that someone could do for the wrong reason (and name a wrong reason).
- What are some examples of people in the Bible doing something for the right or wrong reason?
- Why is it wrong to do the right thing for the wrong reason?
- What does Jesus say about wrong motives in Matthew 6:1-18?

\*\*\*Our motive should be **LOVE** – for God and for people. How would having this motive change our lives?

**3. The Power Source**

- Everyone give an example of something that needs a power source and what the source is.
- We also need power in order to act like Christ. What is our power source?
- Who do we have to have a relationship with in order to have access to that power? Why?

\*\*\*We draw on the power of the Holy Spirit through **PRAYER** and **THE WORD**.

**4. Responsible Dependence (or Dependent Responsibility)**

- What are some examples of things in life where we have a responsibility to do something as best as we can but are still dependent on something/someone else to get the result we want?
- How are these things similar to our relationship with Jesus?
- What is our responsibility and what is God’s?

Discuss which areas above are the most difficult for you to think rightly about. Where do we go wrong? What mistakes do we make?

Everyone name one area of their lives that we discussed that they want to grow in.

- What will it take to do that?

Next week’s fighter verse

Romans 12:11-13 “Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”

- What is something that sticks out to you from this passage? What does this passage say about God and/or people? How should this passage impact our daily lives?

## Practice of Godliness

### Ch. 5 – Taking on God’s Character - Part 2

#### Fighter Verse: Romans 12:11-13

*Recite/read fighter verse – what does this verse mean for us?*

#### **5. Putting Off AND Putting On**

- In every hobby/talent/skill we do there are things we need to build up to get better and things we need to stop doing that would make us worse.
  - Everyone give an example of a hobby/talent. What are some skills that need to be built up and what are some negative things that need to be stopped to get better in that area?
- Growing in godly character is the same. We aren’t just to stop sinning: we have to put off sinful character and put on godly character. Read Ephesians 4:28-32. What things are to be put off and what things are to be put on in replacement?
  - What other examples can you think of things that need to be put off or put on to grow in godlikeness?

#### **6. Growth in All Areas**

- Think again about hobbies/talents/skills discussed earlier. What are examples of what it might look like for someone to be really good at one aspect of that skill but bad in all others? Why doesn’t this work?
- Godly character is the same. We must seek to develop in all areas of our lives, not just ones that we are naturally inclined to do.
  - Could anyone share an area of godly character that seems to come naturally to you as well as an area that is more difficult for you? We all have these in our lives.
  - What are some ways we could try to grow in areas that are hard for us?

#### **7. Growth is Progressive and Never Finished (...until you die)**

- What does progressive mean? What are some examples of how this growth could happen in someone’s life?
  - The Bible emphasizes the progressive nature of our growth.
    - “Little by little” – Proverbs 13:11
    - “Transformed...one degree...to another” – 2 Corinthians 3:18
    - “Train yourself” – 1 Timothy 4:7
  - Growth is always happening, either negative or positive. There is no neutral with regard to godliness. Think about which way you are moving in different areas of your life, toward God or away?
- Is the best performer/player in the world in any activity ever perfect all the time? Neither are we ever finished growing in any area of our lives.
  - The Bible emphasizes that we will never be perfect in this life (Philippians 3:12, Isaiah 64:6)

**Remember: God gives growth. The Holy Spirit will lead you in certain areas to grow in, not all at once.**

Everyone name one area of their lives that they want to grow in and pray for each other.

#### Next week’s fighter verse

Romans 12:14-16 “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.”

- What is something that sticks out to you from this passage? What does this passage say about God and/or people? How should this passage impact our daily lives?

## 9/16/18 - WHAT IS HUMILITY?

- Fighter Verse – Matthew 5:3-6
- Prayer
- New City Catechism - Question 1: What is our only hope in life and death?  
Answer: That we are not our own, but belong to God. Romans 14:7-8

### What is Humility?

- Before looking at the Bible, what does humility mean to you?
- Write down what humility is and is not according to each of these verses.

<u>Verse</u>	<u>Humility is</u>	<u>Humility is not</u>
Philippians 2:3	Counting others more significant than yourself	selfish ambition, conceit
Philippians 2:6-8	emptying self, becoming a servant, being obedient	elevating self
Luke 18:14b		exalting self
2 Samuel 22:28		haughtiness (arrogantly superior)
Psalms 25:9	leadable, teachable	
1 Peter 5:5	being subject to those in authority, able to receive grace	Pride
James 4:6-7a	Able to receive grace, Submitting to God	Pride

- Based on these verses, what would be your quick definition of humility?

- Why does it take humility to believe in Jesus Christ?

Humility sees God as so much greater than us and sees us in our sin as lowly and needing help. Humility is able to receive the grace and forgiveness of God. Pride elevates ourselves above needing God and thinks we are superior and therefore not needing a savior.

- Prayer Requests:

The humble person will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all.

- C.S. Lewis

## 9/23/18 – GOD’S DISPLAY OF HUMILITY

- Fighter Verse – Matthew 5:7-10

- Prayer

- New City Catechism - Question 1: What is our only hope in life and death?

Answer: That we are not our own, but belong to God. Romans 14:7-8

Question 4: How and why did God create us?

Answer: God created us male and female in his own image to glorify him.

Genesis 1:27

### God is Humble

- *Review: What is humility?*

- **It is vitally important that God is humble.** Read each of these passages and answer why it is so important for us that God is humble.

- Philippians 2:5-11

- **God had to leave heaven and become a man in order to live a perfect life and die on our behalf in order for us to be saved – we need His perfect life applied to us to be saved. Without God humbling himself by leaving the comforts of heaven and becoming a servant in human form and dying on the cross, we have no hope.**

- **Summary: God must be humble for us to be saved.**

- **“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” (Matt. 23:12) – Jesus had to humble himself in order for God to “highly exalt him and bestow on him the name that is above every name”. Without Jesus humbling himself, He would not be the world’s Lord and Savior, and we would be unsure how everything would turn out. Jesus has authority and sovereignty over all things because of his humility.**

- **Summary: God must be humble for us to trust His rule over all things.**

- Matthew 11:28-30

- **Because God is humble, we can come to him with our weariness and our troubles and He will give us rest and help us along. His humility is why He is willing to stoop down to our level and lead and teach us. Without His leading in our lives, we would all go astray and be unable to obey Him.**

- **Summary: God must be humble for us to obey Him. God must be humble for us to find rest (earthly and heavenly).**

- Matthew 20:27-28

- **We have a debt that must be paid because of sin which we are unable to pay ourselves. It is the humility of God that is willing to pay that price (ransom) on our behalf.**

- **Summary: God must be humble for him to pay our debt for us.**

- What did Jesus do to show humility in these passages?

Philippians 2:5-8, John 13:1-5, Zechariah 9:9/Matthew 21:5

- What did he do that was humble?

**Did not go after equality with God. Emptied himself. Became a servant. Left the comforts of heaven and became a man. Obeyed the Father. Died on the cross for us. Washed the disciples’ feet. Entered the city on a donkey (not a horse).**

- Why was it humble for Him to do these things?

**He came to earth and died in order to exalt us, not to exalt himself. He washed the disciples’ feet which was treating them more significant than himself. He entered the city on a lowly donkey, rather than a horse which would have elevated himself and portrayed his own authority.**

- What are some other things Jesus did to demonstrate humility?

**Talked to the Samaritan woman at the well. Healed the blind, lame, sick and dead.**

**Spent time with the worst sinners of that day. Taught his disciples for 3 years. Etc.**

- **The gospel depends on the humility of God.** What are some ways we could explain the gospel that *emphasizes* God's humility?

- **Emphasizing that Christ was in heaven with God and left his comforts there in order for there to be a gospel. Emphasizing that He was God and deserved to be treated infinitely times better than he was, but took the disgrace and shame that he might bring us to God. Etc.**

- Prayer Requests:

- **Homework: Study Philippians 2:3-11 and write down 3 things that stick out to you, 2 questions you have, and 1 way you can specifically apply these verses to your life.**

The humble person will not be thinking about humility; he will not be thinking about himself at all.

- C.S. Lewis

## 10/7/18 – WHY IS HUMILITY IMPORTANT?

- Fighter Verse – 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

- Prayer

- New City Catechism - Question 4: How and why did God create us?

Answer: God created us male and female in his own image to glorify him.

(Genesis 1:27)

Question 6: How can we glorify God?

Answer: By loving him and by obeying his commands and law. (Deut. 11:1)

### The Importance of Humility

- *Review: What is humility? How did/does God demonstrate humility?*

### **Why is Humility Important?**

#### **1. God's interactions with us are based primarily on our humility.**

- Open up to the following verses and share what God does towards us if we are humble.

Isaiah 57:15, Isaiah 66:2, Proverbs 3:34, James 4:6, Matthew 5:3, Luke 18:14,

Psalms 25:9

**He will dwell with the humble, revive the humble, look to the humble, give favor to the humble, give grace to the humble, give the kingdom of heaven to the humble, exalt the humble, lead the humble, and teach the humble.**

- On the opposite side, what does God do towards us if we are proud?

**He does not dwell with us or revive us. He looks away from us. He withholds his favor and grace from us. He opposes us. He does not give us the kingdom of heaven. He does not exalt us but brings us down. He does not lead or teach us.**

- Where do we get the power to act with humility? Can we be humble by our own efforts?

**The Holy Spirit through our belief in Jesus Christ. No.**

#### **2. Humility is the soil in which all other Christ-like traits/qualities grow.**

- Name some Christian character traits/qualities/fruits of the Spirit. Why does it require humility to exercise this trait?

**Many. i.e. Patience is humility towards our time because if others are important than me it is OK if my time is "inconvenienced" because people/God are more valuable than our time. Patience recognizes God is in control.**

**Contentment is humility towards our circumstances/situation/possessions because I do not deserve anything good. Contentment recognizes that God is in control.**

- Name some sinful behaviors. Why are these sinful behaviors an expression of pride?

**Many. i.e. Envy says I deserve more (high view of self). Lying says my image/agenda is more important than obeying God or loving people (high view of self/low view of God and people).**

- How do we grow in humility?

**We must know Christ as our Lord and Savior. His Spirit gives us power to be humble. We must confess prideful ways in our lives. We must pray and ask God for help. We must learn from His Word. We must make an effort**

- Prayer Requests:

**- Homework: Think of one prideful way of thinking/doing in your life. Confess that sin and pray this week for God to help you be humble then make an effort to change. Consider sharing your experience next week.**

The humble person will not be thinking about humility; he will not be thinking about himself at all.

- C.S. Lewis

## 10/14/18 – HUMILITY BEFORE GOD

- Fighter Verse – Psalm 32:8
- Prayer
- New City Catechism - Question 4: How and why did God create us?  
Answer: God created us male and female in his own image to glorify him.  
(Genesis 1:27)
- Question 6: How can we glorify God?  
Answer: By loving him and by obeying his commands and law. (Deut. 11:1)

- *Review: What is humility? How did/does God demonstrate humility? Why is humility important?*

### **Humility Before God**

#### **1. Humility toward God begins with a high view of God.**

- Why does it take humility to believe in Jesus as our Lord and Savior? ***We must have a lowly view of ourselves in order to admit we are sinners who need to be forgiven, and we must have a high view of God and His love for us in order to accept Jesus as His holy sacrifice for us.***

- In the Bible, what are people's reactions when they see God? (Exodus 34:5-8, Isaiah 6:5, Ezekiel 1:28, Revelation 1:17) Why did they react this way?

***Moses bowed down and worshipped quickly; Isaiah cried out "woe is me!"; Ezekiel fell on his face; John fell at his feet as though dead.***

***They saw God for who He was in his perfect holiness and majesty and realized they were way out of their league > they didn't deserve to be in His presence.***

- How does each of the following actions help us have a high view of God?

1. Recognizing the ugliness of our sin – ***when we see how sinful we are and how offensive this is to God, we realize how much we need God and how amazing it is that He is perfect in holiness***

2. Prayer – ***We need to ask God's help to hate our sin and see Him as great, we can't do this on our own. We need the power of the Holy Spirit***

3. Studying the Word of God – ***The Word of God is the description of who God is. We can't know how great God is without seeing Him in His Word.***

- Being humble towards God includes being humble towards His Word. What does it mean to be humble or proud towards the Word of God? How can we study the Bible in a humble way? ***Pride towards God's Word says "I am right" no matter what, does not see sin as bad as it is, and doesn't see the need to change. Humility towards God's Word says "God is right", see sin as a horrible offense against God, and allows the Bible to speak to certain areas of our lives where we need to change.***

***We can study the Bible a humble way by always being on the lookout for things that we can apply to our life. The Bible is meant to change us and expose sin in our lives.***

#### **2. Humility toward God accepts good and bad things in life in a humble way.**

- If good things happen in our lives, how can we receive them from God in a humble way? (James 1:17) What are some examples of good things in our lives? ***If we are humble towards God, we have a high view of God which recognizes that ALL good things in our lives come from him which should lead to thankfulness.***

- What are some things people might do that receives good things in their life in a proud way? ***Boast about themselves, take all the credit, use it to serve sin in their lives, etc.***

- If bad things happen in our lives, how can we receive them from God in a humble way? (Job 1:21-22) What are some examples of bad things in our lives? ***If we are humble***

**towards God, we have a high view of God which recognizes that 1. every bad thing in the world exists because of sin, 2. God does not sin and is perfect in all of his ways (James 1:13) – He makes no mistakes, and 3. God loves us so much and uses all bad things in our lives to turn out for our His glory and our ultimate good (if we are saved) which is to make us more like Jesus.**

- What are some things people might do that receives bad things in their life in a proud way? **Get angry at God, blame God, believe they deserve better, think God is not loving if he would allow this to happen, think God made a mistake or did wrong**  
- Everyone think of something hard in your life right now and think of how God could be using it to make you more like Jesus. Share with the group if you are comfortable sharing.

- Prayer Requests:

**- Homework: Study 1 Peter 5:5-11 and write down 3 things that stick out to you, 2 questions you have, and 1 way you can specifically apply these verses to your life. (Swedish Bible study method)**

The humble person will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all.

- C.S. Lewis



## 11/4/18 – HUMILITY ABOUT SELF

- Fighter Verse – 1 Corinthians 10:31
- Prayer
- New City Catechism - Question 4: How and why did God create us?  
Answer: God created us male and female in his own image to glorify him.  
(Genesis 1:27)

Question 6: How can we glorify God?

Answer: By loving him and by obeying his commands and law. (Deut. 11:1)

### Humility About Self

- Humility about self is humility towards
  1. **Our own character** (who we are) which says we do not deserve anything good because of our sin and have no good qualities without God, and
  2. **Our own ability** (what we do) which says we do not have the ability to bring anything good into our lives without God.
- 1. Humility towards our own character recognizes that we are sinful and do not deserve anything. Using the verses below discuss what we deserve because of our sin, what our character is like before we come to know God, and what our character is like after we come to know God.
  - Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death”
  - Ephesians 2:1-3 “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”
  - Titus 3:3 “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.”
  - Galatians 5:22-26 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become **conceited (aka proud)**”
- How does this change happen in our character? Who is primarily responsible for this change in us?
- 2. Humility about self recognizes that everything we have and are able to do is from God. Discuss 1 Corinthians 4:7. (What is boasting? What are some examples of things we are tempted to boast in? Did we receive those things from God?)
  - 1 Corinthians 4:7 “What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?”
  - Examples of things we have received:
    - Deuteronomy 8:17-18 “Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’ You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth”
    - 1 Corinthians 15:10 “by the grace of God I am what I am”
    - 1 Corinthians 3:7 “So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.”
    - Isaiah 26:2 “O Lord, you will ordain peace for us, for you have indeed done for us all our works.”
- What are some things you have succeeded at in your life? Who should get the credit for it and why?
- Prayer Requests:

**- Homework: Think about one way in which you are proud towards yourself. Ask God to help you become more humble in that area this week.**

The humble person will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all.

- C.S. Lewis

## 11/11/18 – HUMILITY TOWARDS OTHERS

- Fighter Verse – Romans 5:18-19

- Prayer

- New City Catechism - Question 6: How can we glorify God?

Answer: By loving him and by obeying his commands and law. (Deut. 11:1)

Question 7: What does the law of God require?

Answer: That we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves.

(Matt. 22:37-40)

### Submission, Service, and Honor

**Humility towards others involves submission, service, and honor.**

Submission: a. *From the following passage, what is submission? What would the opposite of submission be?*

Matthew 5:38-42 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.”

b. *From the previous passage and the following verses, who are we to submit to?*

Ephesians 5:21 “submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Ephesians 5:22 “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.”

1 Peter 5:5 “Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders.”

Titus 2:9 “Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything” (bondservants or slaves would be comparable to employees today being submissive to employers/bosses)

Titus 3:1 “Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities”

Service: a. *What does service to others look like in these verses?* b. *What are some things we can do to be servants?*

Galatians 5:13-14 “through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

1 Peter 4:10-11 “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.”

Honor: *Using these verses, a. What is it mean to honor someone? and b. Who are we to honor?*

Ephesians 6:2 “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother””

Philippians 2:3 “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”

1 Peter 2:17-18 “Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.”

**How did/does Jesus show submission, service, and honor to God? to us?**

- Prayer Requests:

**- Homework: Think about one way in which you are proud towards others. Ask God to help you become more humble in that area this week.**

The humble person will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all.

- C.S. Lewis

Possible Answers:

Submission: a. Submission is giving to those who ask or beg, doing as asked or told, going beyond what we are asked or told, going out of our way to obey someone.

The opposite of submission would be getting revenge, making demands, resisting orders, fighting for our “rights”, demanding respect, doing as little as possible to get by, holding on to things for ourselves.

b. evil people, other Christians, spouses, elders, employers/bosses (masters), rulers, authorities (in all areas of life> teachers/parents/police/government) >>>>short answer=everyone

Service: a. demonstrating love towards each other (actions), speaking words that build up/encouragement (words), acting towards others in a way that gives glory to God, doing sacrificial (hard) things that require God’s strength

b. many practical examples in different areas of our lives

Honor: a. be ready and willing to obey, having a higher view of them than yourself, thinking others more significant than self, not being self-centered, loving people, being ready and willing to submit (be subject), show respect

Honor comes before service and submission. We must have a high view of somebody before we are able to serve them or submit to them. Honor is being ready and willing to serve and submit.

b. parents, other Christians, the emperor (AKA the governmental authorities), our employers/bosses (masters), the good and gentle, the unjust >>>>>short answer=everyone (it doesn’t matter if they deserve honor)

### **How did Jesus show submission, service, and honor to God and/or to us?**

Jesus submitted to God by obeying Him to the point of death on a cross. Jesus served God by carrying out his commands. Jesus honored God by holding Him as supremely valuable and more important than himself which made him ready and willing to serve and submit.

Jesus submitted to us by suffering abuse, scoffing, and murder at the hands of evil people which He did not deserve. He did not take revenge, make demands, fight for his “rights”, or demand respect. Jesus served us by dying for us on the cross the death that we deserved. Jesus honored us by viewing us as more important than himself which made him ready and willing to serve and submit to us. (for the record, we didn’t deserve this honor – Psalm 8:4 “what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?”)

## 11/25/18 –CONTENTMENT

- Fighter Verse – 1 Peter 2:9-10

- Prayer

- New City Catechism - Question 6: How can we glorify God?

Answer: By loving him and by obeying his commands and law. (Deut. 11:1)

Question 7: What does the law of God require?

Answer: That we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves.

(Matt. 22:37-40)

### **What is Contentment?**

- The words Content or Contentment in our Bibles actually means Sufficiency.

- What is sufficiency? So, what do you think contentment is?

- **Contentment is recognizing the sufficiency of God's**

**1. Provision for our needs**

**2. Grace for our circumstances**

- If we don't believe God is sufficient for these things, what are we saying about God?

- Think about a bunch of examples from our lives where we are tempted to be discontent with either what we have or what our circumstances are? What are we actually saying about God being enough for us when we are discontent?

- We should take contentment extremely seriously. It is an extreme offense to God to be discontent, Satan uses it often, and it has a long history of destroying people.

- Why is discontentment an offense to God? (Pg 82.3)

- The very first temptation in the history of mankind was to be discontent. How was Satan tempting Adam and Eve to be discontent and to question the goodness of God? (Genesis 3:1-6)

- When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, what did he tempt Him to be discontent about? (Matthew 4:8-9)

- Read Isaiah 14:12-15. Most believe this is talking about Satan himself. What was Satan's biggest problem? (Pg 83.1)

- Jesus spent the largest section of His sermon on the mount talking about "you cannot serve both God and money"

- The following people were all punished by God for their discontentment:

- Achan (Joshua 7), Gehazi (2 Kings 5), Ananias/Sapphira (Acts 5), Many more

- God's attitude towards discontentment has not changed since the Old Testament.

- Discontentment can be at the root of any sin. Think of some sins. How could discontentment be the underlying cause of these sins?

- Ultimate contentment can only be found where?

- Proverbs 19:23 "The fear of the Lord leads to life, and whoever has it rests *satisfied*"

- Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be *satisfied*."

- The content person has found satisfaction and rest in their soul

- Definitions of Contentment: 1. Sufficiently provided for, 2. Having enough, 3. Trusting the goodness of God, 4. Satisfaction.

- Everyone please share an area of their life where they are discontent. Pray about that area for these few weeks, and let's try to all pray for each other in their areas of discontentment.

- **Homework: Pray this week that God would show you areas of discontentment in your life. Pick one and pray that God would help you be content in that area.**

"Discontentment is one of the most satanic things."

- Jerry Bridges

## 12/2/18 –CONTENTMENT WITH MONEY/POSSESSIONS

- Fighter Verse – Romans 10:17
- Prayer
- New City Catechism - Question 6: How can we glorify God?  
Answer: By loving him and by obeying his commands and law. (Deut. 11:1)  
Question 7: What does the law of God require?  
Answer: That we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves.  
(Matt. 22:37-40)

### **Contentment with Money/Possessions**

- God has commanded us to be content with our money and possessions. What are some possessions we have that we are tempted to be discontent with?
- Read each of the following verses. What is the reason God gives us in each verse for why we should be content with possessions like the examples we just listed?
  - Luke 12:15
  - 1 Timothy 6:6-10
  - Hebrews 13:5-6
- We do not deserve any of the possessions we have. What do we actually deserve and why?
  - Therefore, all of our possessions are a free gift of God. What is the greatest gift we have been given?
  - None of our possessions can compare to the gift of Jesus Christ. How should thinking about the gift of Jesus Christ make us feel about our possessions? How should thinking about our possessions make us feel about the gift of Jesus Christ?
- God in his sovereign good pleasure has seen fit to give some people more wealth and possessions than others. What might it look like to be given more or less at different stages of life?
  - If God has chosen how much everyone has, we are not to envy, boast, or question His decisions.
    - What is envy? What is boasting? What is questioning God's decisions? Why does it not make sense for us to do any of these things with regard to possessions?
- For those whom God has blessed with wealth or an abundance of possessions > with privilege comes responsibility. Who do you consider wealthy?
  - If everything your family owns is worth at least \$3,650, you are in the top 50% of the world's wealthiest people. If your family owns an old car, you are there.
  - If everything your family owns is worth at least \$77,000, you are in the top 10% of the world's wealthiest people. If your family owns an old house, you are there.
    - Read the following verses. Do we have more or less responsibility because we are wealthy?
      - Luke 12:48b, 1 Timothy 6:17-18
      - What kind of things might God hold us more accountable to do because we are wealthy?
- How does God want us to respond to money/possessions?
- Prayer Requests:

**- Homework: Pray about one area of discontentment in your life. Read and fill out the Bible study sheet for 1 Timothy 6:6-10, which we will study next week.**

"Contentment is one of the most distinguishing traits of the godly person because a godly person has his heart focused on God rather than on possessions or position or power."

- Jerry Bridges

## **Possible Answers**

- What are some possessions we have that we are tempted to be discontent with? Many answers.
- What is the reason God gives us in each verse for why we should be content with possessions like the examples we just listed?
  - Luke 12:15 – Our life does not consist in the abundance of our possessions; our possessions are not what truly matters
  - 1 Timothy 6:6-10 – we can't take anything with us when we die, discontentment leads to temptation/harm/ruin/destruction/evil/wandering from the faith/piercing with many pangs
  - Hebrews 13:5-6 – God will provide for us, God is our security and refuge and protection, God is a far better provider and protector than our possessions
- What do we actually deserve and why? An eternity of hell this very instant. Our sin against a holy and righteous God.
- What is the greatest gift we have been given? Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for sins on our behalf.
- How should thinking about the gift of Jesus Christ make us feel about our possessions? It should make our possessions seem of extremely little value because of how great the gift of Jesus is. It should make us think of and hold our possessions much more lightly.
- How should thinking about our possessions make us feel about the gift of Jesus Christ? We should see how great we think our possessions are and realize how much greater the gift of Jesus is. All our possessions should point to Christ.
- What might it look like to be given more or less at different stages of life? Many answers.
- What is envy? Thinking something we don't have will satisfy us.
- What is boasting? Being proud in what we have. Thinking what we have is more satisfying than what others have.
- What is questioning God's decisions? Thinking that God made a mistake in giving more or less to me or others.
- Why does it not make sense for us to do any of these things with regard to possessions? We shouldn't envy because possessions don't satisfy, and God decided it was best for you not to have what you are desiring. We shouldn't boast because everything we have has been given to us by God and we do not deserve it; and again, possessions do not satisfy. (As an aside, numerous studies have actually shown this; the amount of money and possessions someone owns has ZERO effect on their happiness). We shouldn't question God because he is God and knows what is best for each individual person.
- Who do you consider wealthy? Many answers.
- Do we have more or less responsibility because we are wealthy? More.
- What kind of things might God hold us more accountable to do because we are wealthy? Be generous and ready to share, be rich in good works, recognize that it is all from God, hold everything with an open hand, be content, don't be envious or greedy for more, etc.
- How does God want us to respond to money/possessions? Recognize it is all from Him. Recognize it is all an undeserved gift. Recognize the gift of Jesus is of infinite more value. Recognize possessions are not what truly matter in life. Recognize we can't take anything with us. Recognize God, not possessions, is our provider and our protection. Recognize that possessions don't satisfy us. Trust God's sovereignty over our money/possessions. Be generous and ready to share.

## 12/16/18 –CONTENTMENT WITH POSITION/TALENTS

- Fighter Verse – 2 Corinthians 5:21
- Prayer
- New City Catechism - Question 7: What does the law of God require?  
Answer: That we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves.  
(Matt. 22:37-40)
- Question 13: Can anyone keep the law of God perfectly?  
Answer: Since the fall, no human has been able to keep the law of God perfectly. (Rom. 3:10-12)

### **Contentment with Position/Talents**

- Read Romans 12:4-8.
- **God has given each of us different gifts/talents.**
- What are some ways you think God has gifted you? How would God want those put into practice/use in your life now? How could you use it in a way that serves yourself (with or without the appearance of godliness) or doesn't honor God?
- Are there any areas of your life that you wish you were gifted in? How can we be content with those areas of our lives we aren't as strong in? How would we honor God in our weaknesses?
- Why did God create us all with different gifts/strengths/weaknesses?
- How would it look to respond in a godly way towards other people's strengths?
- How would it look to respond in a godly way towards other people's weaknesses?
- How should we view our own strengths and weaknesses with contentment?
- **God has given each of us different positions in our family, our work, our school, and the body of Christ.**
- We are members of many different groups in our lives. Romans uses the analogy of a body. How is the church like a body?
- What are we saying about God when we think someone is worthless?
- How would God want us to build others up within our family, the body of Christ, or school (where not everyone is a Christian)?
- How would God want us to view our position within our family, work, school, and church?
- How can we grow in contentment with our position in these different areas of our lives?
- Why does it take humility to be content with our position?
- **Our duty is to discover what God wants us to be and do on the basis of our gifts, our positions, our experiences, our godly desires, etc.**
- God has made all of us to fulfill a unique purpose within the body of Christ. How can we try to figure out what God wants us to do?
- Why is it important to grow in contentment with our talents?
- Why is it important to grow in contentment with our positions?
- How can we recognize discontentment? What can we do when we recognize discontentment in our lives?
- Does being content with our talents/positions mean we don't try to improve in those areas? Why or why not?
- Prayer Requests:

### **- Homework: Pray about one area of discontentment in your life. Ask God to help you be content and humble in that area.**

"Contentment is one of the most distinguishing traits of the godly person because a godly person has his heart focused on God rather than on possessions or position or power."

- Jerry Bridges

### Possible Answers

- What are some ways you think God has gifted you? How would God want those put into practice/use in your life now? How could you use it in a way that serves yourself (with or without the appearance of godliness) or

doesn't honor God? **God would want us to use our gifts to serve him-advance his kingdom/help those in need/serve others/etc. Serving ourselves would be to build self up/show off/boast/be proud/put others down/ignore the needs of others.**

- Are there any areas of your life that you wish you were gifted in? How can we be content with those areas of our lives we aren't as strong in? How would we honor God in our weaknesses? **We can be content by recognizing that God made us this way on purpose/by not envying other's strengths/by focusing on serving God with what he has given us rather than focusing on what he hasn't given us/etc. We can honor God in our weakness by knowing we need Him to work through us in all circumstances/by not giving up but trying to get help (from others, His word, His Spirit, praying) to do what God has called us to/etc.**

- Why did God create us all with different gifts/strengths/weaknesses? **So that we would need to be in community with each other in order to accomplish things. We were made for community with others so God made us to need it. God wants to show his power by working through a group of people who are all very different from each other but are serving God in unity. So that we wouldn't get proud from being good at everything. Etc.**

- How would it look to respond in a godly way towards other people's strengths? **Encouraging them in their strengths. Not envying their strengths. Etc.**

- How would it look to respond in a godly way towards other people's weaknesses? **Building them up/encouraging them. Not looking down on them in pride. Etc.**

- How should we view our own strengths and weaknesses with contentment? **Know that God made us who we are and gave us all our strengths and weaknesses. He gave us exactly the skills we need to serve Him how He wants us to. Etc.**

- We are members of many different groups in our lives. Romans uses the analogy of a body. How is the church like a body? **Different parts have different strengths and weaknesses. We all need each other to function properly as one group. We are all members of the same body and work to help each other and fulfill a singular purpose. Etc.**

- What are we saying about God when we think someone is worthless? **He did not know what he was doing in creating that person. It is pride to look down on someone as though we are above them which disregards God's commands. Etc.**

- How would God want us to build others up within our family, the body of Christ, or school (where not everyone is a Christian)? **Encouragement. Service (Humility). Thankfulness for other's strengths. Etc.**

- How would God want us to view our position within our family, work, school, and church? **He wants us to recognize that he placed us exactly where he wants us to be and where we can most glorify him.**

- How can we grow in contentment with our position in these different areas of our lives? **Pray that God would help us be content and expose areas of discontentment. Study the Bible and let it change us. Etc.**

- Why does it take humility to be content with our position? **Humility recognizes we don't deserve anything and so is thankful for anything positive in our lives including talents/position/etc.**

- God has made all of us to fulfill a unique purpose within the body of Christ. How can we try to figure out what God wants us to do? **Pray for God's wisdom. Try serving in different ways and see what we enjoy doing that helps others. Look at our strengths/weaknesses/past experiences/desires and use them as a guide to what you might be led by God to do. Etc.**

- Why is it important to grow in contentment with our talents? **If we don't we will become proud and boast as if we gave out talents to ourselves. We will be able to handle more success if we are faithful with a little.**

- Why is it important to grow in contentment with our positions? **God has us in our positions for his specific purposes, and it is where we will be able to serve him most.**

- How can we recognize discontentment? What can we do when we recognize discontentment in our lives? **We can recognize discontentment only through prayer asking God to expose it in our lives and through his Word which will shine a spotlight on those areas. When we see it we must confess it as sin and ask God to help us turn from it in our lives.**

- Does being content with our talents/positions mean we don't try to improve in those areas? Why or why not? **No. We want to grow in as many ways as possible so that we can serve God in as many ways as possible. Being content doesn't mean we don't seek better things, it means that our satisfaction does not depend on getting those better things. Our satisfaction is found only in God.**



## 12/30/18 –CONTENTMENT WITH CIRCUMSTANCES

- Fighter Verse – Ephesians 3:20-21

- Prayer

- New City Catechism - Question 7: What does the law of God require?

Answer: That we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves.  
(Matt. 22:37-40)

Question 13: Can anyone keep the law of God perfectly?

Answer: Since the fall, no human has been able to keep the law of God perfectly. (Rom. 3:10-12)

### **Contentment with Circumstances**

- We live in a sin-cursed world and are not immune from the frustrating, irritating, often overwhelming circumstances of life. What are some examples from our lives?

- **All circumstances of your life are directed by God; NONE are by chance.** Read Ephesians 1:11. What things does God work according to the counsel of his will? What kinds of circumstances?

- **All trials of our lives (small and large) are meant to change us to become more like Jesus.** Read James 1:2-4.

- What does James say the purpose of trials are?

- Because of this, how does James say we should feel towards trials?

- How can we be joyful about trials? Is it easy or hard?

- Think about some examples of trials you thought of earlier. How could God be specifically using these to change someone to become more Christ-like?

- **Contentment is the secret to handling difficult circumstances.**

- Review: What is contentment?

- Why does contentment help us handle difficult circumstances?

- What are some signs in our thoughts/heart/actions/words that we are discontent?

How do you specifically show discontentment? What does discontentment look like?

- Can we be content in our own strength?

- What is our part and what is God's part in being content?

- **We can only be content if/when God's grace is sufficient (enough/contentment) for us.** Read 2 Corinthians 12:9. (The word "sufficient" could be translated "contentment").

- From this verse, what is enough (contentment) for us?

- What must we believe in order to be saved and have this grace from God?

- **Jesus gave himself to deliver us from the curse of sin.** If we believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, we can be confident that:

1. All of our trials serve a great purpose in our lives (to change us to be like Jesus)

2. All of our suffering will end when we go to be with Christ

3. God has prepared heaven for us where there will be no frustration, no irritations, no overwhelming circumstances, and nothing else coming from the curse of sin.

- **We must learn to realize the following:**

1. Whatever situation we're in is FAR better than we deserve.

- What do we deserve because of our sin?

2. God's divine assistance through the Holy Spirit is always with us to help us respond in a godly and content way.

- Prayer Requests:

- **Homework: Pray about one area of discontentment in your life. Ask God to help you be content and humble in that area.**

Next week's fighter verse – Matthew 22:37-39 "And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup>This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup>And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

- What sticks out to you? What questions do you have? How can we apply this to a specific circumstance of our life?

## 1/6/19 –GROWING IN CONTENTMENT

- Fighter Verse – Matthew 22:37-39

- Prayer

- New City Catechism - Question 7: What does the law of God require?

Answer: That we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves.  
(Matt. 22:37-40)

Question 13: Can anyone keep the law of God perfectly?

Answer: Since the fall, no human has been able to keep the law of God perfectly. (Rom. 3:10-12)

### **Growing in Contentment**

- Practical steps to growing in contentment.

1. Renew your mind

- Read Romans 12:1-2. What does “renewing your mind” mean?
- What are some ways we influence our minds negatively? Positively?
- Why is renewing our minds important?

2. Pray

- What things might we confess and ask forgiveness for in prayer? (regarding contentment)
- What are some things we might ask God for in prayer? (regarding contentment)
- What are some things we might be thankful to God for in prayer? (regarding contentment)

3. Recognize that God must work in us

- Why can't we become more content on our own?
- What is God's role vs. our role?

4. Focus on the true values of life

- What are some of the true values of life?
- Why is Jesus the truest and greatest value of the Christian life?

5. Define success in life as service to others that is pleasing to God (aka. Being faithful)

- What does worldly success look like?
- Why does achieving some measure of worldly success not bring contentment?
- What might it look like for you to have God's definition of success in school?  
In your family? At church? With your friends?

- Read Philippians 4:11b-13.

- What are some things that stick out to you from this passage?

- What questions do you have?

- How can we apply this passage to our lives?

- How did Paul get to the point where he was content in any situation? (verse 11)

- How did Paul get to the point where he knew how to abound or be in need? (verse 12)

- How did Paul learn to be content? Why does going through hard situations teach us contentment?

- How is Paul able to be content in any circumstance? (verse 13)

- Prayer Requests:

**- Homework: Continue to pray about discontentment in your life. Read the next chapter of the book, “Thankfulness” (chapter 8), by 1/20/18.**

## 1/20/19 –THANKFULNESS

- Fighter Verse – Isaiah 43:1-3

- Prayer

- New City Catechism - Question 7: What does the law of God require?

Answer: That we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves. (Matt. 22:37-40)

Question 13: Can anyone keep the law of God perfectly?

Answer: Since the fall, no human has been able to keep the law of God perfectly. (Rom. 3:10-12)

### **Thankfulness**

- Some godly traits reflect the character of God, others recognize and exalt His character: Humility recognizes His majesty, Contentment recognizes His grace, Thankfulness recognizes His goodness

- Read Luke 17:11-19, the parable of the ten lepers.

- Discuss this parable. What are some things that stick out to you? What questions do you have?

- What was it like to be a leper in that time? What was different about the one leper that returned to Jesus? What does Jesus think about the fact that 9 lepers were not thankful?

- How does our sin make us like lepers before we are saved? Who can heal us?

- What is thankfulness in your own words?

- **Our thankfulness is important to God** (as shown in the parable of the 10 lepers). There are 150+ verses about giving thanks.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:18 “give thanks in all circumstances”

- Colossians 3:15 “be thankful”

- Psalm 106:1 “Oh give thanks to the LORD”

- Like the 9 lepers, we are often anxious to receive but too careless to give thanks.

- What are some things we are often not thankful for? Why not?

- What are some things that we want but then can be too careless to give thanks?

- How can we be more thankful for these things?

- We are to be thankful for ordinary and extraordinary things in our lives. What are some ordinary things in our lives we can be thankful for? Extraordinary?

- **Failing to be thankful is sin.**

- Read Romans 1:21. Why is failing to be thankful sin? How is it pride?

- What should we do if we recognize areas of our lives where we’ve sinned by failing to be thankful?

- **Thankfulness to God** = recognition that God in His goodness and faithfulness has provided for us and cared for us, both physically and spiritually. It acknowledges the bountifulness of His hand in providing and caring for us.

- Read Daniel 6:4-10. How were things going for Daniel at this point in time? And yet, what did he make sure to do (verse 10)? Even in hard times we are to give thanks (1 Thess. 5:18=all circumstances).

- **Thanksgiving is a normal result of our union with Jesus Christ.**

- Prayer Requests:

- **Homework: Think of one area of your life that you are often ungrateful and pray that God would help you in that area. If you haven’t already, read the chapter of the book, “Thankfulness” (chapter 8).**

Psalm 100:4-5 “Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.”

## 1/27/19 – THE PURPOSE OF THANKFULNESS

- Fighter Verse – John 14:6
- Prayer
- New City Catechism - Question 13: Can anyone keep the law of God perfectly?  
Answer: Since the fall, no human has been able to keep the law of God perfectly. (Rom. 3:10-12)
- Question 19: Is there any way to escape punishment and be brought back into God's favor?  
Answer: Yes, God reconciles us to himself by a Redeemer. (Isaiah 53:10-11)

### **The Purpose of Thankfulness**

#### **#1 – Thankfulness acknowledges God's goodness and honors him.**

- Psalm 50:23 says "The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me".
- When we thank someone, we are saying something about that person's actions and/or character. What are we saying about another person when we thank them for something?
  - What are some real-life examples of this?
- What are we saying about God's actions/character when we thank him?
- What does it mean to honor or glorify God? (God's glory is the sum of His attributes) Why does thanking him do this?
- Why is God worthy of our thanksgiving?

#### **#2 – Thankfulness promotes humility in our lives.**

- Review – What is humility? The opposite of humility?
- It is our tendency to take credit that rightfully belongs to God. Why is this wrong?
- What are some things in our lives that we tend to take credit for?
  - Isaiah 26:12 "for you [God] have indeed done for us all our works". What does God deserve the credit and thanksgiving for in our lives?
- Why does giving credit to God for these things promote humility?

#### **#3 – Thankfulness stimulates our faith.**

- Psalm 50:14-15 connects thanksgiving with calling upon him in the day of trouble. Why would giving thanks help us trust in God more?
  - What are some areas in life where we need to trust God more? What might we give thanks for in those situations that will help us trust Him?
- Read Philippians 4:6-7. What does it say happens when we offer prayers including thanksgiving to God? How does the peace of God help us trust him more (specifically from verse 7)?

#### **#4 – Thankfulness promotes contentment.**

- Review – What is contentment?
- Why do you think being thankful helps us be content?
- Focusing our thoughts on the blessings God has already given us forces us to stop yearning for things we don't have. What are some earthly things in our lives that we yearn to have?
  - What might we be thankful for in those areas that might help us be content with what we do have rather than continuing to long after those earthly things?
- Each person pick one of these purposes of thankfulness as one that you think you need most in your life. Why? What can you be thankful for that will help you in this area (be specific)?
- Prayer Requests:

**- Homework: Think of one area of your life that you are often ungrateful and pray that God would help you in that area. If you haven't already, read the chapter of the book, "Thankfulness" (chapter 8).**

Next week's fighter verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:14-17. What sticks out to you from this passage? What questions do you have? How can you apply this to your life?

## 2/3/19 –GROWING IN THANKFULNESS

- Fighter Verse – 1 Thessalonians 5:14-17

- Prayer

- New City Catechism - Question 13: Can anyone keep the law of God perfectly?

Answer: Since the fall, no human has been able to keep the law of God perfectly. (Rom. 3:10-12)

Question 19: Is there any way to escape punishment and be brought back into God's favor?

Answer: Yes, God reconciles us to himself by a Redeemer. (Isaiah 53:10-11)

### **Growing in Thankfulness**

- Read Colossians 2:6-7. What is the foundation of an attitude of thankfulness?

- What is it mean to receive Christ? What does it mean to walk in Him? What does it mean to be rooted and built up in him and established in the faith?

- Why do these things lead to thankfulness?

- What are some real-life specific examples of how walking with Jesus in a certain way might lead to thankfulness?

- Think of some opportunities you have to walk closer with Jesus and share. How might this lead to thankfulness? Why do we want to grow?

- **We need the Holy Spirit to change us, and He gives us a thankful spirit through our fellowship with Jesus Christ.**

- **We must cultivate the habits of always giving thanks.** (1 Thess. 5:17-18, Eph. 5:20)

- What are some ideas you have for trying to get in the habit of always giving thanks?

- Other ideas: Praying for more than food at meal times, beginning and ending each day with a time of giving thanks, write down prayer requests and thank God for answered ones, keep a list of significant blessings for which to always be thankful, set aside time to do nothing but thank God, include thanksgiving in normal times of prayer (Col. 4:2, Phil. 4:6)

- Which of these ideas do you think would be most helpful for you? Why? How could you implement?

- Why are habits like these important?

- **An ungrateful heart must be transformed by the renewal of our mind (Bible and prayer).**

- What are different ways we can expose ourselves to and intake the Word of God?

- How/why does the Bible change us? Why is spending time in the Word of God so important? How does this make us grow in thankfulness?

- What are some ways you specifically can increase your time intaking the Word of God?

- What are some examples of how learning from the Bible has changed you?

- What are some ways that we can fall short in our devotion to God's Word?

- What is prayer? Why is it so important? How does prayer change us? How does it make us grow in thankfulness? What are some examples of prayer changing you?

- Think about some things we can do that can help us grow in our prayer life. Which way would be most helpful to you?

-What are some ways that we can fall short in our devotion to prayer?

- Prayer Requests:

- **Homework: Study Colossians 3:15-17 using the Inductive Method. Fill out the homework sheet.**

## 2/24/19 –JOY

- Fighter Verse – Proverbs 3:11-12
- Prayer
- New City Catechism - Question 19: Is there any way to escape punishment and be brought back into God's favor?  
Answer: Yes, God reconciles us to himself by a Redeemer. (Isaiah 53:10-11)  
Question 20: Who is the Redeemer?  
Answer: The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 2:5)

### **Joy**

- Discuss joy. What do you think of when you think of joy? What is it? What kind of person is joyful? What do they do? Do you think you are a joyful person? Why/why not?
- **1. Joy is the enjoyment of God.** Joy is the result of having a relationship with God.
- Read Romans 14:17-18. What can we learn about joy from this passage?
  - True or False: Joy is optional. True or False: Joy is important.
  - Joy is our privilege and our duty.
- Why would a relationship with God naturally lead to joy? Why would it be wrong for a relationship with God to not lead to joy? How does our joy reflect our relationship with God?
- **2. Joy transcends circumstances.** What does this mean?
- We aren't to just wait around for our circumstances to make us joyful. We are commanded to be joyful.
  - 1 Thessalonians 5:16 "Rejoice always".
  - Philippians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice."
- Why is rejoicing commanded (see point 1)? What are some ways you think you could increase your joy/rejoicing? (This will be its own lesson later)
- **3. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit.** What does this mean?
- We do not have joy apart from the Holy Spirit.
- Read Romans 15:13. How do we get joy?
- How do we get the Holy Spirit in our hearts? How do we get help from the Holy Spirit? If we need the Holy Spirit so much to grow in joy, what is our responsibility?
- Some people are naturally more joyful than others, but that is the case with all other virtues. No one has arrived at being a perfectly joyful person. We should be continually growing in joy which involves seeking the Holy Spirit's help in these ways.
- **4. Only Christians have a reason to be joyful.** Why is this true? What do we have a reason to be joyful about? Why don't non-Christians have a reason to be joyful?
- It may often seem like non-Christians are joyful. Why is that not real joy? (See points 1/2)
- What are some things that it seems bring people joy besides God? Why will that not last, both in this life and in the life to come?
- The purpose of joy is not just so we feel better (though we do), but its purpose is to glorify God. How does joy give glory to God (show more about who He is)?
- Life often seems anything but joyful. What are some areas of your life where you haven't been joyful? What kinds of things in our lives make joy hard? What should we do in these situations?
- Think of an area of your life that you want to pray about for God to increase your joy.
- Prayer Requests:

### **- Homework: If you have not, read Chapter 9 of the book: "Joy". Pray about areas of your life where you are lacking joy.**

- John 10:27-30 "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

### 3/3/19 –JOY’S OBSTACLE #1 - SIN

- Fighter Verse – John 10:27-30
- Prayer
- New City Catechism - Question 19: Is there any way to escape punishment and be brought back into God’s favor?  
Answer: Yes, God reconciles us to himself by a Redeemer. (Isaiah 53:10-11)  
Question 20: Who is the Redeemer?  
Answer: The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 2:5)

#### **Joy**

- Recap: What is joy? What happens to joy in hard circumstances? Who makes us grow in joy? Who has a reason to be joyful and why?
- **Sin blocks joy.** Discuss why/how this is the case. (Joy is enjoyment of God so how does sin impact our relationship with God and therefore our ability to enjoy him?)
  - What do sin and joy say about God in their own way?
  - Sin can be either sinful actions or attitudes. Think of an example of when you were in a sinful state of mind or doing a sinful action. How did you feel? Could you see yourself being able to enjoy God in that moment?
- Psalm 32 illustrates the relationship between sin and joy. Read Psalm 32.
  - Verses 1-2: What word is used to describe the person whose sin is forgiven and is not walking in sinful attitudes (“no deceit”)? How does that word relate to joy?
  - Verses 3-4: David has not yet confessed his sin (“kept silent”) which he does in verse 5. How does he describe how he feels? How do his words relate to joy?
  - Verses 5-6: David confesses his sin and asks for forgiveness. What does God become to David as a response in verse 7? How does that response relate to joy?
  - Verses 8-9: God tells David he will teach, instruct, and counsel him as long as David does not walk in sin (“without understanding”). Why does having God teach and walk with us lead to joy? Why does not having God teach us lead away from joy?
  - Verses 10-11: What do the wicked have? How does that relate to joy?
    - What does the person who trusts in the Lord have?
- So, what should we do when we see sin in our lives?
- Why does the righteous person have reason to rejoice whereas the wicked person does not?
- **When we aren’t experiencing joy, we should examine our hearts and lives for sin.**
  - Questions we can ask ourselves: Are we doing or have we done something displeasing to God? Are we holding on to some sinful attitude like envy, resentment, or a critical and unforgiving spirit towards someone else? Is there some sin in my life that I am aware of that I haven’t brought to God?
    - Joy can’t exist when these attitudes control our hearts.
  - What are some sinful attitudes in your life that might be hurting your relationship with God where joy is found?
- **God is able to restore your joy.**
- Psalm 51 talks about the restoration of joy lost due to sin. Read Psalm 51:1-12.
  - Many verses talk about sin/lack of sin (purity). What do each of these verses (1-5, 7, 9-10) say about sin?
  - What is God in his “steadfast love” and “abundant mercy” able to do with our sin according to these verses (1-2, 7, 9-12)?
  - What happens to our joy when we receive God’s abundant love and forgiveness in these verses (8, 12)?
- Prayer Requests:
- **Homework: Complete the Inductive Method Worksheet for Psalm 126 located on the back of this sheet. Please and thank you.**

## 3/17/19 – JOY'S OBSTACLE #2 – MISPLACED CONFIDENCE

- Fighter Verse – Psalm 100:1-3
- Prayer
- New City Catechism - Question 19: Is there any way to escape punishment and be brought back into God's favor?  
Answer: Yes, God reconciles us to himself by a Redeemer. (Isaiah 53:10-11)  
Question 20: Who is the Redeemer?  
Answer: The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 2:5)

### **Joy**

- Recap: What is joy? What happens to joy in hard circumstances? Who makes us grow in joy? Who has a reason to be joyful and why?
- **Our confidence must be in Jesus Christ alone to have true joy.** What does this mean?  
*What does it mean for something to have our confidence?*
- When we have confidence in something, we are trusting in it for our assurance that the future (this life or the next) will go well for us.
  - Read Philippians 3:3-9. What are some things Paul could put his confidence in instead of Jesus Christ? Are these things bad in and of themselves? Why would these things be bad ideas for Paul to put his confidence in?
- Misplaced confidence can lie in all kinds of areas. Talk about each of these example areas that we can put confidence in. What does it look like and how do we feel/think deep down when we put confidence in these areas? Why does it not provide lasting joy?
  - Our talents or abilities
  - Money or possessions
  - Relationships with family/friends
  - Our reputation/popularity
  - Our prior successes
  - Our employment/school situation
  - The amount of time we spend reading the Bible or praying
  - How often we go to church
  - How much we know about God/the Bible
  - How “godly” we are
  - Any other examples you can think of?
    - Are any of these things bad in and of themselves? That is why it is so hard to identify when we are putting confidence in them!
- **All of us are putting some amount of confidence in things that are not Jesus.** It is so easy to do because they are good things, but we can gradually end up trusting in them and not in God from whom they came. What are you tempted to put confidence in?
- If our source of confidence is anything besides Jesus, any joy derived is false and often interrupted.
  - Read Luke 10:17-20. What is the disciples' misplaced confidence in? What did Jesus tell them to should give them joy? Why didn't Jesus want the disciples to rejoice that the spirits were subject to them? (hint: what bad thing can we do to good things?)
- Being happy about good things is not bad, but they shouldn't be the source of our confidence.
- None of the things above can last as our source of joy because they come and go. What is the one thing that remains certain throughout our lives? If our joy comes from that, will our joy ever go away?
- Perhaps you feel like you haven't done very much significant with your life. *If your name is written in heaven, you have as much reason to rejoice as the apostle Paul.*
- Prayer Requests:
- **Homework: Pray that God would show you areas of your life where you have some misplaced confidence and help you trust in Christ alone.**



### 3/24/19 – JOY'S OBSTACLE #3 – TRIALS (GOD'S DISCIPLINE)

- Fighter Verse – Psalm 100:4-5

- Prayer

- New City Catechism - Question 20: Who is the Redeemer?

Answer: The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 2:5)

Question 24: Why was it necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to die? (Colossians 2:21-22)

Answer: Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God.

#### **Joy**

- Read Luke 22:54-62 about Peter's denial of Jesus. What was Peter's trial? What did Peter do in the face of a hard situation? Did he have joy? Why not?

***Discipline is not a joyful experience, but if we lose sight of its intended results or feel we don't deserve it, we become self-pitying and bitter rather than joyful.***

- Match the intended result (5 R's) of trials/God's Discipline to the verse describing it.

- Luke 13:4-5

- Righteousness

- 2 Corinthians 1:8-9

- Reminder

- Hebrews 12:6,10-11

- Reliance

- 2 Corinthians 4:17

- Repentance

- Philippians 3:10

- Reward

- What are some examples you can think of in the Bible of people experiencing trials.

Based on what we can see, what might have been some of God's intended purposes?

- Do you have any examples of trials you have gone through that you can look back and see what God did in you through it?

***God loves us so much that he is always working, even in hard times, for our good.***

- Why does remembering this about God help us be joyful?

- Why do you think it takes trials for us to grow? (We don't have a specific answer in mind.)

- It is only those who are in Jesus Christ who will genuinely grow through trials. Jesus purchased any good we ever get when he died on the cross. Discuss what Jesus did for us and why all blessings come only through Him and nowhere else.

- If true blessing only comes through Jesus, why does it seem like non-Christians get good things all the time?

- What is the purpose of trials in the life a non-Christian?

#### ***What is steadfastness?***

- Read James 1:2-4,12. Why is steadfastness important? Why is it hard?

- Job is an example of how trials can wear you down. How did his steadfastness hold up from Job 1:21 to Job 34:9?

- Paul is an example of how to be steadfast in trials. What bad things happened to Paul? (2 Corinthians 11:23-28)

- How did he remain steadfast? (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

- Prayer Requests:

**- Homework: Pray that God would give you peace in your trials and help you know deep in your heart that God is working for your good to make you like Jesus Christ.**

Next week's fighter verse: Ephesians 2:1-3 "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind."

## 3/31/19 – GROWING IN JOY: THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Fighter Verse – Ephesians 2:1-3
- Prayer
- New City Catechism - Question 20: Who is the Redeemer?  
Answer: The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 2:5)
- Question 24: Why was it necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to die? (Colossians 1:21-22)  
Answer: Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God.

### **Joy**

***It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that we grow in joy.***

- Read Galatians 5:22-23, Romans 15:13, Romans 14:17, and 1 Thessalonians 1:6. Discuss what the Spirit is and what it means to have the Spirit working in us: (example questions)
  - What is someone's spirit? How does this help us think about God's Spirit?
  - How do we get the Spirit? (Galatians 4:6, 1 Thess. 4:8)
  - What does fruit of the spirit mean?
  - What exactly is the Spirit doing in us? (1 Cor. 2:10,12; Job 32:8; Isaiah 11:2; Mark 13:11/Luke 12:12; John 14:26, John 15:26; Romans 8:26-27)
  - Why do we say the Holy Spirit works in us rather than just saying God/how are God the Father and the Holy Spirit distinct? (see above verses, John 6:63; Luke 11:13)
  - What things in our lives does the Spirit use to change us? (Ephesians 6:17-18)
  - What is the goal of the Holy Spirit? (2 Cor. 3:6, 1 Cor. 2:10,12; Ezekiel 36:27)

***The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God and Prayer.***

- If joy comes from the Holy Spirit, why do we have to do anything? What is our role?
- There are times when the Bible and/or prayer seem lifeless and powerless, but we must remember that *the Holy Spirit* is the one who works in us. The word of God and prayer are simply His instruments.
  - We must look to him with faith and patience.
  - We are both responsible and dependent. How can we demonstrate this in our lives?

***We can resist the work of the Holy Spirit two ways: quenching and grieving.***

- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:19. What do you think it means to quench the Spirit?
  - What might quenching the Spirit look like in someone's life?
  - What happens if we continue to quench the Spirit?
- Read Ephesians 4:30. What do you think it means to grieve the Holy Spirit?
  - What might grieving the Holy Spirit look like in someone's life?
  - How is grieving the Holy Spirit different than quenching?
  - What happens if we continue to grieve the Holy Spirit?
- What would it mean then for us to neither grieve nor quench the Holy Spirit?
- The working of the Holy Spirit applies not just to joy, but to all godly characteristics in our lives.
- Prayer Requests:

**- Homework: Pray that God would show you areas you have resisted the Holy Spirit in your life and that God would change you by His Spirit to become more like Jesus Christ.**

The Holy Spirit has been given to us by God. He is the literally God's Spirit through whom God gives us life, wisdom, knowledge about God, words to say, encouragement, and spiritual gifts. The Spirit's goal is to orient us to God and display Jesus Christ through these various means.

## 4/7/19 – GROWING IN JOY

- Fighter Verse – Ephesians 2:4-5

- Prayer

- New City Catechism - Question 20: Who is the Redeemer?

Answer: The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 2:5)

Question 24: Why was it necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to die? (Colossians 1:21-22)

Answer: Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God.

### **Joy**

Discuss each of these ways to grow in joy and how we can apply them specifically to our lives. How do we do each of these things? Give some examples of what it might look like in someone's life. Why does it help joy?

1. Confess and Forsake sin (Psalm 32)

2. Trust in God (Romans 15:13)

3. Take the long-range view of life (1 Pet. 1:6, 2 Cor. 4:18, Heb. 10:34;12:2)

4. Give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thess. 5:18)

- What are some other ways you can think of that can help us grow in joy?

Discuss each of these things that come as a result of joy. Why does joy lead to these things? Why do we want these things?

1. God is pleased when we serve with joy (Rom. 14:17-18)

a. Some people are naturally more joyful than others, but God wants us to exhibit all characteristics of Jesus even if it isn't a strength of ours.

2. We are strengthened physically/emotionally/spiritually (Neh. 8:10)

a. When we are discouraged (no joy) we feel like we have no energy at all (weak).

- What are some other results of joy you can think of?

### ***The choice to be joyful is ours.***

To be joyless is to do the following 3 things:

1. Dishonor God

2. Deny God's love for us

3. Deny God's sovereignty over all things

- Why does joylessness do these things? How does joy lead us away from these things?

- How can we be sad or sorrowful yet still have joy? (2 Corinthians 6:9-10: What do we have if we have nothing?)

### ***Joy says to the world "our God reigns".***

- What have you learned about joy that you did not know before?

- What questions do you have about joy?

- Prayer Requests:

**- Homework: Study the passage John 16:20-24 on your own using the inductive method on the back of this sheet and bring with you next week.**

- Prayer
- Memory Verse List – Practice and/or share your memory verse
  - Would someone be able to talk about what their verse means?
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 1: What is our only hope in life and death? That we are not our own but belong, body and soul, both in life and death, to God and to our Savior Jesus Christ. (Romans 14:7-8)

### **God’s Holiness**

- What are some ways we could define holiness, God’s or ours or both? (Both – without sin, consistent with God’s character. God - perfect freedom from all evil, the essence of moral purity. Ours - Christ-likeness, God-honoring, has a lot to do with desires and motives, has to do with pleasing God and not just “how do I not sin”, can’t attain fully in this life)
  - What are some synonyms we might use for the word holiness? (Sinless, pure, blameless, perfect)
  - What is sin? (disobeying God/doing something inconsistent with who God is, valuing something more than God, this could be doing something we should not or not doing something we should)
  - Discuss how holiness involves each of these areas of life – actions, thoughts, attitudes, motives
- Read Isaiah 6:1-7’s picture of what God’s holiness looks/feels like. What do you notice?

(Don’t have to spend a ton of time on since we will fully discuss next week with the accompanied video)

  - Holy is one of the most common words used to describe God in the Bible. Discuss why you think this might be. (It is the specific attribute that most sets Him apart as God. It is the greatest distinction between us and Him. It is the clearest emphasis on why we deserve hell/separation from God and what are fallen condition truly is > GOOD TIME TO TALK ABOUT GOSPEL > God’s holiness most emphasizes our need that can only be fulfilled in Christ. Etc.)
- Read Psalm 24:3-4. What can the holiness of God allow and not allow to have in His presence? Why?
  - Because God is holy, how does He feel about sin? (He hates it. Since he is infinitely holy, he hates sin infinitely. He hates sin so much more than we do.)
    - Can God tempt us to sin? See James 1:13-14. (No.) Why or why not? (He is holy and can’t tolerate sin so can’t make us desire sin.)
- Discuss why God’s holiness should be comforting to us.
  - To help, what if God wasn’t sure what the right thing to do was? What if God was hesitant or reluctant to do what is right? What if God was unfair or unjust? What if God was straight up evil? (We can be confident that his actions toward us are always perfect and just. God will never treat us unfairly. He will never do wrong. Etc.)

## Jesus' Holiness

- Read the following verses - Hebrews 4:15, 1 Peter 2:22, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 John 3:5. What do these verses say about Jesus regarding holiness? (Jesus lived a completely holy life and never sinned. One way we know this is true is because Jesus asked Pharisees to name one thing he did wrong but they couldn't even though they wanted to kill him, and the disciples who spent all their time with him couldn't think of anything either.)

- Jesus not only didn't have sin, but He positively did what to be completely holy? (He obeyed God with every action, thought, attitude, and motive. Holiness has to do with not just actions, but also attitudes, thoughts, and motives.)

- Jesus' life was perfect. Everything Jesus did, every action, thought, desire, plan, goal, attitude, impulse, and motive pleased God, and Jesus' life is meant to be an example to follow for us. ***He was perfectly holy and we needed him to be in order for us to have salvation through him. Why?*** (if Jesus sinned in any way his death would have been the punishment for his own sin rather than for the sins of those who trust in him)

- Prayer

**For Next Time: - Read Chapter 10 of Practice of Godliness, "Holiness" if you haven't.**

***- Keep memorizing the verse you've chosen. Add another if you can.***

***- If able, watch the video about holiness at [thebibleproject.com](http://thebibleproject.com) which we will watch next time.***

## **Holiness Memory Verses (pick at least 1, bracketed section optional)**

- 1 Peter 1:14-16 "[As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but 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."

- 1 John 1:5 "[This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that] God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

- 1 Peter 2:11 "[Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to] abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul."

## Youth Sunday School – Holiness through the Bible - 9/29/19

- Prayer
- Memory Verse List – Practice and/or share your memory verse
  - Would someone be able to talk about what their verse means?
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and read associated verse
  - Question 2: What is God? God is the creator of everyone and everything. (Psalm 86:8-10,15)
  - Question 3: How many persons are there in God? There are three persons in one God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

### **Holiness through the Bible**

- How did the video describe God's holiness? (utterly unique, dangerous to approach, source of life, powerful, impacts area surrounding Him [sun metaphor])
- For whom is God's holy presence dangerous to? (the impure)
- What are the two kinds of impurity the video discussed and what do they mean? (moral and ritual, moral purity is keeping away from sin, ritual purity is staying away from anything related to death – is not necessarily sinful)
  - Do we worry about ritual purity now and why or why not? (No. The ritual ceremonies were given to the nation of Israel for reasons that no longer apply to us. It was for other reasons than actually making them pure)
    - Hebrews 10:4 "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."
  - So, what was the point of having ritual purity be a thing? (Symbolic, To illustrate how holy God is, to prevent people from dying in his presence, to foreshadow something/someone who would actually be able to make us pure, to separate Israel out from other nations, a picture of how invasive sin is)
- Read the following biblical progression of illustrations of God's holiness
  - Moses and the burning bush – Exodus 3:1-5
    - Why did Moses have to take his sandals off and not come near? (he was on holy ground and the feet were viewed as the most impure part of us – like the seraphim in Isaiah covering their feet with 2 wings, coming any nearer would bring him closer to God's holiness which would be more dangerous to him)
  - Israel's temple – Leviticus 16:1-6
    - Where was the most dangerous place in the tabernacle and why? (the most holy place/the holy of holies, it was the closest proximity to God's holy presence – like the sun analogy)
  - Isaiah and the burning coal – Isaiah 6:1-7
    - What is normally supposed to happen when something impure touches something pure? (The impurity is transferred.) What actually happened? (Purity was transferred.)
    - What does this foreshadow? (Something so pure it can touch the impure and transfer its purity to them)
  - Ezekiel's vision – Ezekiel 47:1-12

- Describe the river that flows out of God's temple. (the river gets deeper and deeper, it gives life to all it touches, it makes salt water fresh, it causes numerous trees to grow and numerous animals to live)
- In Leviticus, what had to happen to enter the temple? (Had to become pure first and then enter God's holy presence)
  - What happened instead? (God's holiness flowed out from the temple making things pure)
- What does this foreshadow? (life coming from the presence of God, life coming from God's temple – what is God's temple now? [us], Revelation)
- Jesus says he is fulfilling these visions.
  - What did Jesus go around doing? (he went around touching people who are impure > bleeding/dead/skin diseases)
  - What was supposed to happen? What did happen? (their impurity should transfer to Jesus but instead his purity transfers to them and heals their bodies)
- Jesus claims he is the human embodiment of God's own holiness and that He and his followers are now God's temple.
  - What flows out from God's temple? See John 7:38. (a river that brings life and healing and hope)
  - What does this mean that we are meant to be as Jesus' follower?
- Final vision of God's holiness – Revelation 22:1-2
  - What vision do we see replayed here? (Ezekiel)
  - Where will this happen? (New heaven and earth in eternity)
- What is the solution to our impurity? (we need Jesus to touch us > how do we get this? GOSPEL)
- Prayer

**For Next Time: - Read Chapter 10 of Practice of Godliness, "Holiness" if you haven't.**

***- Keep memorizing the verse you've chosen. Add another if you can.***

### **Holiness Memory Verses (pick at least 1, bracketed section optional)**

- 1 Peter 1:14-16 "[As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but 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."
- 1 John 1:5 "[This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that] God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

- Prayer
- Memory Verse List – Practice and/or share your memory verse
  - Would someone be able to talk about what their verse means?
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and read associated verse
  - Question 4: How and why did God create us? God created us male and female in his own image to glorify him. (Genesis 1:27)
  - Question 5: What else did God create? God created all things and all his creation was very good. (Genesis 1:31)

### **Two ways of holiness**

- What is holiness? (without sin, morally blameless, pure, God's holiness > utterly unique, dangerous to approach, source of life, powerful, impacts area surrounding Him [sun metaphor])

- Scripture talks about holiness in two ways, in one way we have it but in another way we don't have it – we have the perfect holiness of Jesus if we believe in Him but we also pursue holiness in our daily lives.

- Hebrews 10:10 (NLT) says “For God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time.” Do Christians have holiness already? (Yes) How? (GOSPEL – you can review the pictures of purity we watched in the video last week > burning coal making pure/river from the temple turning salt water to fresh and giving life/Jesus touching and making pure. We have Christ's holiness applied to us if we believe.)

- This holiness reflects our standing before God. If we are in Christ, we are dressed in His (Jesus') holiness and are viewed by God as being holy.

- Read Hebrews 12:14. Do Christians have holiness already? (No – because we are to strive for it)

- This holiness reflects how we live our lives. If we are in Christ, we want to honor and glorify Him by trying to live in His image which involves holiness in our actions, thoughts, motives, etc.

- Read 1 John 1:8 and Ecclesiastes 7:20. Will we ever perfectly achieve holiness in this life? (No, but we are to desire it as those who want to honor God with our lives)

- Does trying to live holy affect our salvation? (No, salvation is only through trusting in Jesus)

- Read Romans 8:8 and 1 Thessalonians 4:1. Can Christians (in the power of the Holy Spirit – not our own strength) actually please God with our actions/thoughts/motives/etc.? (Yes – in the power of Christ! This is so important! We are often taught that we can't please God using for example Isaiah 64:6 that all our righteous deeds are filthy rags but that passage is talking about those who do not follow God. God did not give us his holy spirit to produce filthy rags, our good works can actually be good works – but only if we are in Christ) Can non-Christians actually please God? (No. See Romans 8:8. Without the Spirit we can't do what would honor God.) Does our pleasing God earn us salvation? (NO! – this has to be crystal clear)

- *Any questions about both ways of talking about holiness? Talk about some ways why you think holiness in our daily lives is important.* (increasing practical holiness always accompanies salvation which means our pursuit of holiness is evidence of salvation [but not the reason for it]> maybe we want to emphasize this that our pursuit of holiness doesn't add to salvation?, holiness is necessary for effective service to God, it is a witness to those who don't know God, it is an encouragement to other Christians)



### **Pursue holiness in what?**

Read Ephesians 4:25-5:10. Paul talks about three general areas of our lives where we are to pursue holiness. Talk about how this passage talks about each and how we can pursue holiness in our lives in these areas. Are there any examples of this in our lives to illustrate pursuing holiness or pursuing something else? Which of these resonates most with you?

- Honesty – A refusal to lie, steal, or deceive in any way.
- Peaceableness – Freedom from bitterness, anger, or strife of any kind.
- Purity – Not even a hint of sexual immorality in word, look, thought, or act.

- Ephesians 5:10 is so important. It says “try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.” This is so important for us in trying to pursue holiness and also in showing that we can please God with what we do if we are in Christ. God wants us to think and pray about what He would have us do.

- Prayer

***For Next Time: - Using the sheet on the back, read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7 using the inductive method of Bible study.***

### **Holiness Memory Verses (pick at least 1, bracketed section optional)**

- 1 Peter 1:14-16 “[As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but 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.”

- 1 John 1:5 “[This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that] God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

- 1 Peter 2:11 “[Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to] abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.”

## Youth Sunday School – How We Pursue Holiness: Knowledge of the Truth – 10/20/19

- Prayer
- Memory Verse List – Practice and/or share your memory verse
  - Would someone be able to talk about what their verse means?
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and read associated verse
  - Question 6: How can we glorify God? By loving him and by obeying his commands and law. (Deuteronomy 11:1)
  - Question 7: What does the law of God require? That we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves. (Matthew 22:37-40)

### **Review**

- What is holiness? (without sin, morally blameless, pure, God's holiness > utterly unique, dangerous to approach, source of life, powerful, impacts area surrounding Him [sun metaphor])
- What are the two ways scripture talks about holiness? (One way we already have if we believe in Jesus (GOSPEL) > it is His holiness given to us which is perfect. The other way we do not already have perfect holiness in our daily lives but strive for it as we seek to love and honor God.)
- What are the three general areas that Paul talks about pursuing holiness? (Honesty, Peacableness, and Purity)

### **How we pursue holiness: #1 – Convictions: Knowledge of the Truth**

- What is a conviction? (a strongly held belief)
- Read Romans 12:2. How does transformation in our convictions and lives happen? (By the renewal of our minds)
  - This transformation can be good or bad. It just depends what our minds are being renewed with. Our minds are being renewed whether we like it or not. What we feed our minds with has a profound impact on who we become.
- What does renew your mind mean? (Filling your mind with something which changes how you think/act/feel)
  - What are things that we do which fill our mind with something? (listen to music, watch TV/movies, hanging out with friends, what we read, classes in school, etc.)
  - Are these things good or bad in and of themselves? (No) Does everything we intake have to be explicitly religious? (No, God made the entire world and so many things that can be learned about are a reflection of Him even if not explicitly)
  - What are some ways that we fill our mind and renew it with the things of this world (evil)? (listening to bad music, watching bad films/TV, hearing cursing/ludeness from our friends, reading things that degrade God, etc.)
  - What are some ways that we fill our mind and renew it with Godly things? (see/look for God in our hobbies/likes/things that we enjoy that aren't explicitly religious, listening to God-glorifying music, memorize scripture, read our Bibles, listen to other scriptural teaching, keep away from any media that degrades God and the Christian way of life, choose godly friends, etc.)
  - Does anyone have any examples from their own lives of how things affecting their minds have had an impact on their life?

- We begin to develop Bible-based convictions as the Holy Spirit applies God's Word to specific areas of our lives and as we are obedient to His leading. Our values begin to gradually change so that God's standard become our delight and desire.

- For those who do not trust in Jesus, what are their convictions based on? (what makes them happy, what appears good to other people, etc.)

- What are the effects of these unbiblical convictions in someone's life? (worsening sin, farther from God, doing things that aren't ultimately good even if they appear that way since they aren't for God, growing dissatisfaction in life, no purpose for living/existing, etc.)

- Without Bible-based, Spirit-developed convictions Christians tend towards one of two sinful extremes:

#1 – We view life as a strict code of do's and don'ts instead of developing Christian character

- Why is just following a list of do's and don'ts wrong? (Because God wants us to honor him from our hearts and not just as an external robotic conformity to what he wants while our hearts are far from Him. Doing a list of things makes us legalistic where we think God just wants us to do stuff rather than to love him with our lives)

#2 – We grow to think that we can do whatever we want since we are "already saved"

- Why is this dangerous? (Because God saved us so that we would have a relationship with him and want to honor him with our lives. If our lives don't show growth in holiness, we can't be sure that we were ever saved in the first place. This thought pattern shows complete disregard and disrespect for God and His Word.)

- We want to build our convictions around God's Word. One thing we have to be careful to avoid though is building a conviction based on misunderstanding an isolated text of Scripture. The Bible is a whole and as a whole is meant to teach us. Can you think of any examples of misunderstanding a single scriptural text? (Some examples - Matthew 5:48 "You must be perfect" taken to mean that we can achieve perfection in this life. Joshua 10:12 "sun, stand still" taken to mean that the sun orbits the earth [people still believe this]. James 2:26 "faith apart from works is dead" taken to mean that works save people. 1 John 3:6 "no one who abides in him keeps on sinning" taken to mean that we stop sinning once we are saved. Exodus 23:19 [KJV] "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk" taken to mean that we shouldn't see a child breastfeed [Lisa has heard this])

- What are some things we can do to avoid falling into the trap of being convicted on misunderstandings? (getting help from other Christians)

- Application: We want to grow through the renewal of our minds. What is at least one specific thing you can start doing today to renew your mind with more of God or less of the world?

- Prayer

**For Next Time: - Read Chapter 10 of Practice of Godliness, "Holiness" if you haven't.**

***- Keep memorizing the verse you've chosen. Add another if you can.***

**Holiness Memory Verses (pick at least 1, bracketed section optional)**

## Youth Sunday School – How We Pursue Holiness: Commitment to Obedience/Choices – 10/27/19

- Prayer
- Memory Verse List – Practice and/or share your memory verse
  - Would someone be able to talk about what their verse means?
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and read associated verse
  - Question 9: What does God require in the first, second, and third commandments? First, that we know God as the only true God. Second, that we avoid all idolatry. Third, that we treat God's name with fear and reverence. (Deuteronomy 6:13-14)
  - Question 10: What does God require in the fourth and fifth commandments? Fourth, that on the Sabbath day we spend time in worship of God. Fifth, that we love and honor our father and our mother. (Leviticus 19:3)

### **Review (quickly)**

- What is holiness? (without sin, morally blameless, pure, God's holiness > utterly unique, dangerous to approach, source of life, powerful, impacts area surrounding Him [sun metaphor])
- What are the two ways scripture talks about holiness? (One way we already have if we believe in Jesus (GOSPEL) > it is His holiness given to us which is perfect. The other way we do not already have perfect holiness in our daily lives but strive for it as we seek to love and honor God.)
- What are the three general areas that Paul talks about pursuing holiness? (Honesty, Peacableness, and Purity)

### **How we pursue holiness: #2/#3 – Commitment to Obedience/Choices**

#### ***Convictions > Commitment > Choice***

- ***Convictions (strongly held beliefs) change your commitments.*** What are some examples of how beliefs about things change what people do? (Political beliefs, religious, what we think about people changes how we treat people, how much we value something changes how much time we devote to it, etc.)
- What is a commitment? (a determination to do something) What is a commitment to holiness? (a determination to live by God's Word as He applies it to our lives)
  - If commitment comes from convictions, what do we need to be convicted about in order to be committed to holiness? (we must be convicted about the GOSPEL > how God demonstrated his love for us and the relationship we have with Him through Jesus > so that we are convicted about the importance of honoring God in that relationship by obeying Him)
  - Review: How do we develop Bible-based convictions that will lead to godly commitments? (By filling our minds with the things of God and His Word which He applies to our thoughts/beliefs by His Holy Spirit > but we must be trusting in Jesus)
- Commitment to holiness must include obedience in all areas. What are some areas of life or specific sins that we tend to not take as seriously?
- The Bible says that even Christians will stumble in many ways. We will inevitably fail to obey God in all areas. What should we do and not do when we realize we have failed in our obedience to God according to these verses?
  - Proverbs 28:13 (confess our sins so that we will receive mercy, do not hide our sins)

- James 5:16 (confess our sins to other people and pray for each other)

- 1 John 1:9 (confess our sins to God [in prayer] who will forgive us and cleanse us)

- What does it mean to confess sin? (to recognize it as offensive to God and to desire to turn away from doing it again, confessing something we don't recognize as offensive to God OR something that we have no desire to stop doing is not confessing sin i.e. "I'm sorry I got caught")

- True confession involves true repentance which is a heart-deep desire to turn away from sin and follow God. We will continue to stumble, but the truly repentant person never takes sin lightly, and as we grow in God we will stumble less and less and will take our sin more and more seriously: this is sanctification.

- What do these verses say about who God is and what He is like? (He is merciful, He wants the best for us (to prosper/grow), He wants us to be healed (spiritual emphasis), He wants us to experience his power, He is powerful, he is faithful and just, he is able to forgive us, he wants to forgive us and cleanse us)

- Why is prayer important in our commitment to obedience and what should we pray for? (we need God's help to obey Him so we must ask Him to strengthen us and give us his spirit to obey him, prayer shows our dependence on God and that we can't do it on our own, prayer is where we confess our sins to God which we must do if we are to receive mercy/healing/strength)

- ***Our commitment to obedience is worked out in our choices.***

- Titus 2:11-12 says that the grace of God teaches us to (make the choice to) say no to ungodliness and worldly passions.

- We make choices based on what we are committed to which is decided by our convictions. We may have choices we would want to make, but if we aren't convicted about or committed to making those choices, it won't happen. Things we kind of want to do won't happen.

- What examples can you think of where people kind of want to do one thing but end up doing another because they aren't convicted or committed (not necessarily sinful things)? (sex, gossip, drinking/partying/drugs, working out, eating well, what kind of employee you are, memorizing bible verses (☺), etc.)

- In these examples, what is that person MORE convicted of or committed to?

- What is the purpose of all this conviction/commitment stuff? (it does NOT save us, these are practical ways for us to pursue God and how he would have us live, how we can live as those who were "bought with a price", we love God because of all he has done for us and want to demonstrate that love in our lives)

- Application: Sometimes we must make commitments to obey in specific areas of our lives. Job made a personal commitment to not look lustfully at a woman (Job 31:1) and Daniel resolved not to defile himself with forbidden food (Daniel 1:8). What is a specific area in your life that you can make a commitment to obey God more?

- Prayer

**For Next Time: - Read Chapter 10 of Practice of Godliness, "Holiness" if you haven't.**

***- Keep memorizing the verse you've chosen. Add another if you can.***

**Holiness Memory Verses (pick at least 1, bracketed section optional)**

- Prayer
- Memory Verse List – Practice and/or share your memory verse
  - Would someone be able to talk about what their verse means?
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and read associated verse
  - Question 11: What does God require in the sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments? Sixth, that we do not hurt or hate our neighbor. Seventh, that we live purely and faithfully. Eighth, that we do not take without permission that which belongs to someone else. (Romans 13:9)
  - Question 12: What does God require in the ninth and tenth commandments? Ninth, that we do not lie or deceive. Tenth, that we are content, not envying anyone. (James 2:8)

#### **How we pursue holiness: #4 – Dependence on the Spirit**

##### ***Convictions > Commitment > Choice EMPOWERED BY Dependence on the Spirit > God-centered Desire***

- ***Anytime we stress personal responsibility, we are in danger of thinking we can do this on our own.***
- We are personally responsible but also totally dependent in our practice of godliness. What does this mean? (It means that we have a responsibility to commit to following God but we need God to be working in us and to change our hearts so that we want and have the power to do any of this in the first place)
  - Walking with God is similar to farming in that it is a joint venture between God and us. How is farming a joint venture between God and man? (*Man has to do the work* in the field preparing, planting and harvesting but is dependent on God to bring the weather that will bring a productive crop. There will be no harvest without Man working the field, but even if man works the field we need God to bring the rain and produce the growth.)
  - Walking in holiness is a joint venture between God and us. We can't do what God must do, and God won't do what we must do.
    - What must we believe to be able be a part of this joint venture? (The GOSPEL) Does walking in holiness add to our salvation or help us be saved? (NO, belief saves us, walking in holiness is our thankful response to His love for us)
    - Read Psalm 119:32-38 which powerfully shows the interplay between our part and God's part. What is God's part and our part from these verses? (GOD: must enlarge our hearts, teach us his statutes, give us understanding, lead us in his commandments, incline our hearts to His testimonies and away from selfish gain, turn our eyes from looking at worthless things, give us life in his ways, confirm his promise to us. WE: run in the way of His commandments, keep his statutes to the end, observe his law with our whole heart, delight in his commandments, turn from selfish gain and looking at worthless things, fear him)
    - Why does this interplay make prayer so important? (Because we need God to work so we should be earnestly seeking him and asking Him to help us walk in holiness)
    - What does this passage from Psalm 119 say about who God is? (He is so loving and caring for us in wanting us to have larger capacity hearts, He cares about whether we make it to the end and wants to help us do that, He wants us to grow in wisdom, He is so merciful and forgiving that when we walk off the path in sin He still is willing to get us back on the path, He cares for our souls in that he wants us to have life and not death, He is faithful to keep his promises and He wants us to know we can trust what He says)
  - What are some excuses that people can give for not working out our own responsibility to walk in a way that honors God? (We leave that responsibility to God by praying for Him to work but not trying at all, we think it isn't

important because it doesn't affect salvation, we are lazy, it's hard, could affect what friends would have me in their friend group, Convictions [therefore commitment, choice and desire] aren't there.)

**- Seeing that both we and God must work for us to walk with Him is vital to our relationship with Him.**

#### **#5 - God-centered Desire**

- God does not honor self-centered desires. Can you think of a way you could want to do the right thing but for a self-centered reason? (We want to appear godly before others, we are more concerned with earthly consequences than with what God thinks, we want to feel good about ourselves) What are some examples of people doing good things for self-centered reasons? (Giving money to charity to get recognized, volunteering so that there is something good to put on resume, not stealing because you know you would get caught, being polite to people so others think better of you, etc.)

- We are by nature self-centered, so being God-centered takes training, diligence, and dependence on God. We must be diligent to examine our own motives. Think about some good things that you do or have done. Why did you do that?

- Often there is a mix in our motives of self-centeredness and God-centeredness. How do we grow in God-centeredness? (being transformed by the renewing of our minds through His Word, praying for his help to grow in our love for Him)

- What should we do when we recognize self-centered motivations in our life? (confess our sin to God, pray for forgiveness and for help in turning away from it, doing our part to turn away from it)

Application: What is an area of your life where you are not depending on God's help (doing something in your own strength)? How can you be more dependent on God?

- What is an area of your life where you have self-centered desires? What can you and God do about it?

- Prayer

**For Next Time: - Read Chapter 10 of Practice of Godliness, "Holiness" if you haven't.**

**- Keep memorizing the verse you've chosen. Add another if you can.**

#### **Holiness Memory Verses (pick at least 1, bracketed section optional)**

- 1 Peter 1:14-16 "[As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but 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."

- 1 John 1:5 "[This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that] God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

- 1 Peter 2:11 "[Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to] abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul."

- Prayer
- Review New Memory Verse List – Discuss one of them
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 15: Since no one can keep the law, what is its purpose? That we may know the holy nature of God, and the sinful nature of our hearts; and thus our need of a Savior. (Romans 3:20)
  - Question 16: What is sin? Sin is rejecting or ignoring God in the world he created, not being or doing what he requires in his law. (1 John 3:4)

### **Self-control**

- Discuss what you think of when you think of self-control.

#### ***- Self-control is a combination of sound judgment and inner strength that governs your desires.***

- What is sound judgment? (Sound judgment is being able to assess circumstances or situations perceptively and draw sound conclusions. It is being able to determine what we should do and how we should respond. It enables us to distinguish good from evil and to sort out the good and the best. It enables us to determine the boundaries of moderation in our appetites, desires, and habits. It helps us regulate our thoughts and keep our emotions under control.) Why would it be an important part of self-control? (Sound judgment is important to self-control because we must know what is right if we are to actually exercise our desires in the right way.)

- Verses related to sound judgment > Romans 12:2 “but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God”; Ephesians 5:10 “Try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord”; Hebrews 5:14 “those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil”

- What is inner strength? (the ability to actually do what we know should be done) Why would inner strength be an important part of self-control? (We often know what to do but still do not do it, inner strength is the power to carry out what we know is right)

- Verses related to inner strength > Romans 7:18 “For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.”; Matthew 26:41 “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

- What areas of our lives does self-control play a part? (all areas) What are some examples?

- Read the following verses. Based on each, why is self-control important?

- Proverbs 25:28 “A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.

- What is the problem with a city broken into and left without walls? (there is no defense/anyone can exercise influence in that city, self-control is important because without it the world/flesh/devil can easily break in and influence us to do whatever they want, our desires will be easily corruptible and influenced)

- 1 Corinthians 7:5b “so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”



- What is more likely to happen when we don't have self-control? (temptation and giving in to temptation, self-control is important to saying no to temptation and staying away from situations where temptations would be very likely to arise)

- 1 Peter 4:7 "be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers."

- Why would our prayers be affected by how we are living? (God is not a vending machine or genie. Self-control is important because God answers the prayers of those who seek him.)

Psalm 66:18 "If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened."

- 1 Peter 2:23 "When he [Jesus] was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."

- Why was Jesus' exercise of self-control important (next time we will focus more on how God/Jesus display self-control)? (If Jesus did not exercise self-control through His suffering, He either would have destroyed everyone who mistreated Him so that He never would have made it to the cross which we so desperately needed, OR He would have sinned by reviling and threatening the people in which case He could not have died for our sins. His death would have been the punishment for his own sin. Self-control is important because if Jesus did not have it, we could not be saved. There would be no gospel or good news. We would all die in our sin.)

- Isaiah 53:7 "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth."

- What does Jesus going through what he did say about God/God's love for us? (God was willing to endure reviling and suffering at the hands of people he created so that we could be reunited with Him. His love was so strong for us that He went to the cross even while we were still sinners who hated him [Romans 5:8] so that we could enjoy eternity with Him.)

- Self-control is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). "Of the Spirit" means that who must be at work in us? (God the Holy Spirit) Let's pray that God works in us "what is pleasing in His sight".

- Prayer

**For Next Time: - Read Chapter 11 of Practice of Godliness, "Self-control" if you haven't.**

**- Choose a verse to memorize from the next page.**

**Self-control Memory Verses (pick at least 1)**

- 1 Peter 2:23 "When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."

- Proverbs 24:16 "the righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity."

- Prayer
- Review New Memory Verse List – Discuss one of them
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 17: What is Idolatry? Idolatry is trusting in created things rather than the Creator. (Romans 1:21, 25)
  - Question 18: Will God allow our disobedience and idolatry to go unpunished? No, God is righteously angry with our sins and will punish them both in this life, and in the life to come. (Ephesians 5:5-6)

***- Self-control is a combination of sound judgment and inner strength that governs your desires.***

### **God the Father’s Self-control**

- Read Exodus 32:7-14. What did Israel do and what did they deserve because of it? (made the golden calf to worship, they deserved death/destruction/punishment for their turning away from God)
  - What did God desire to do to them as a result? (v.10 – destroy them and start over again with Moses)
  - What did God end up doing and why? (v. 14 – he relented from the disaster that he had spoken because it would be a poor witness to the Egyptians [v.12] and would violate his promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob [v.13])
  - How was this a display of self-control? (God knew what should be done and demonstrated his perfect control over His desires by not following through with what He wanted to do to Israel)
  - God always knows the best thing to do [sound judgment] and always has the ability [inner strength] to carry it out. Why is it comforting to us that God has perfect self-control? (we can trust him in all situations, He is always doing what is best for His people)
- Read 2 Peter 3:7-9. What does everyone deserve because of their sin? (v. 7 -judgment and destruction)
  - When did we deserve to receive this punishment? (immediately after sinning)
  - Everyone deserves that punishment, but God demonstrates his self-control through His patience towards people. Why does God show self-control in not punishing people immediately? (v. 9 – He desires that all be saved)
  - His love towards us is so amazing that He shows self-control in not punishing us immediately so that we would come to know Him. What would happen to us if God wasn’t perfectly self-controlled? (there would be no chance for salvation, we would all go to hell immediately)
  - How does God treat us instead? (loves us, sends His Son for us, forgives us, desires that we be saved, actually saves us, walks with us in our lives though we still struggle with sin, etc.)
  - How should God’s loving self-control influence how we treat others? (we should be patient, forgiving, forbearing, desiring them to be saved, walk with them through their struggles, etc.)
- Read Hebrews 12:5-11. What does God’s discipline look like in our lives? (any trial/struggle that we go through)
  - God exercises self-control by not giving us everything we want in this life because He knows what is best for us. Why don’t we have perfect lives now/why do we have to go through such hard things in this life? (v. 10-11 – We

are being disciplined for our ultimate good- that we may share his holiness and become like him and grow the peaceful fruit of righteousness.)

- It is an incredible thought that God actually has to exercise self-control to not give you everything you want. He would give you everything and literally spoil you if he had no restraint! This is very similar to earthly parents as well.

- God is actually loving us when we go through difficult times. He wants us to enjoy a perfect life, but He knows [sound judgment] what is best for us now (becoming more like Christ) and is able [inner strength] to bring it about.

- Why would we want to be more like Christ? (it is what God made us to be, it is how we will be able to enjoy God more fully in this life and in heaven, we are made in His image and meant to represent that image, there is no greater joy than walking in His ways > our quality of life is not actually determined by our circumstances but by how closely we walk with God)

- What is required to make us like Christ from James 1:2-4 “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”? (trials, the testing of our faith)

- This aspect of God’s self-control is hard to wrap our minds around, but it is so important that God acts in this way by caring more about who we are than whether we enjoy all the temporary pleasures of this life.

- Lamentations 3:31-33 “For the Lord will not cast off forever, but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not afflict from his heart or grieve the children of men.”

- Not afflicting from His heart = Though he causes grief He doesn’t afflict us just for the sake of giving us a hard time. He has the bigger picture in mind and is set on us experiencing His compassion and steadfast love.

- To summarize, what are 2 ways why God being perfectly self-controlled is so important? (1. Though He is just He is patient with us so that we might be saved rather than being punished immediately, 2. Though He wants us to enjoy life He allows us to go through difficult times so that we might be transformed to be like Christ)

- Prayer

**For Next Time: - Read Chapter 11 of Practice of Godliness, “Self-control” if you haven’t.**

- ***Choose a verse to memorize from the next page.***

### **Self-control Memory Verses (pick at least 1)**

- 1 Peter 2:23 “When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.”

- Proverbs 24:16 “the righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity.”

- Prayer
- Review New Memory Verse List – Discuss one of them
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 19: Is there any way to escape punishment and be brought back into God’s favor? Yes, God reconciles us to himself by a Redeemer. (Isaiah 53:10-11)
  - Question 20: Who is the redeemer? The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 2:5)

***- Self-control is a combination of sound judgment and inner strength that governs your desires.***

***- God the Father’s self-control is important because 1. He is patient that we might be saved and 2. He allows to go through hard things to become more like Christ.***

### **Jesus’ Self-control**

- Read Matthew 4:1-11.
  - Jesus demonstrated self-control in 3 different temptations which were 1. Turning stones to bread, 2. Throwing himself off the temple, and 3. Bowing down to Satan.
  - For each one, discuss the following questions.
    - What would have been the fleshly desire in each temptation? (1. To flaunt his power in proving that he was the Son of God > temptation made worse by the fact that he was fasting for 40 days and really wanted bread, 2. To flaunt his power in proving that he was the Son of God, 3. To gain all the riches and power in the world)
    - Why were these things wrong to do? (1. And 2. > they put God to the test, doing these things would’ve been for the sake of pride and appearances or just showing off to the devil. 3. It would’ve been bowing down and worshipping someone other than God.)
    - Think about these temptations from Jesus’ perspective. How hard would it have been to say no, especially to the first two? Would we have even known [sound judgment] that we shouldn’t have done it? (It would’ve been very difficult. It is hard to see the wrong in doing particularly the first two things. But pride would’ve been at the heart of falling for those temptations.)
    - What are some examples of temptations we have faced or could face that do/did not have clear best choices?
    - Discuss how difficult it would’ve been to turn down food after 40 days of fasting or to NOT just show off a little all of the power you had. How hard would that be?
    - What are some examples of situations we were in or could be in where the nature of our circumstances made/would make saying no [inner strength] to temptation very difficult?
  - Jesus’ self-control during his temptations were required for him to live a sinless life and pay the penalty for our sins. (Gospel emphasis)
- Read Matthew 16:20 “Then he [Jesus] strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.”

- Jesus told many people during his life to tell no one that he was the Messiah/son of God. Why did he tell people this? (Because if the word spread, the people would've made him their actual political king/ruler)
- Why was it important that Jesus did not become their political ruler? (because then he never would've made it to the cross to die for the sins of the people)
- Why was it self-control for Jesus to have other not spread the word about him? What desire was he tempted by? (because he fought the desire for popularity and instead showed sound judgment and inner strength in doing what was best by staying off the radar as much as possible)
- Jesus' self-control in not spreading the word that He was God was required so he could make it to the cross.
- Read 1 Peter 2:23.
- What was Jesus have been tempted to do while he was being reviled and suffering? (revile in return and threaten the people, destroy them)
- What did Jesus do instead? (remained silent [Isaiah 53:7], and entrusted himself to God)
- How did Jesus demonstrate self-control here? (by not getting back at the people killing him)
  - Would it have been wrong to punish those who were killing him? (No) Would it have been best? (No, see next question for what is best)
- Why was it important that Jesus not revile in return, threaten, or punish those who were killing him? (If Jesus vaporized everyone for their sin he never would've made it to the cross OR if Jesus sinned by reviling or threatening them he wouldn't be sinless and able to take our sins on the cross)
- Jesus' self-control at the end of his life was important so that he made it to the cross and made it there sinless and therefore able to take our sins away.
- What are the main 2 ways that Jesus' self-control is vital to our salvation? (1. His self-control was required to live a sinless life, and 2. His self-control was required so that He could actually make it to the cross)
- What are some ways we can follow Jesus' example in having self-control?
- Prayer

**For Next Time: - Read Chapter 11 of Practice of Godliness, "Self-control" if you haven't.**

***- Choose a verse to memorize from the next page.***

### **Self-control Memory Verses (pick at least 1)**

- 1 Peter 2:23 "When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."
- Proverbs 24:16 "the righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity."
- 1 Corinthians 9:25 "Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable."

- Prayer
- Review New Memory Verse List – Discuss one of them
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 21: What sort of redeemer is needed to bring us back to God? One who is truly human and also truly God. (Isaiah 9:6)
  - Question 22: Why must the redeemer be truly human? That in human nature he might on our behalf perfectly obey the whole law and suffer the punishment for human sin. (Hebrews 2:17)
- ***Self-control is a combination of sound judgment and inner strength that governs your desires.***
- ***God the Father's self-control is important because 1. He is patient that we might be saved and 2. He allows to go through hard things to become more like Christ.***
- ***Jesus' self-control is important because 1. He needed to be sinless to pay for our sins and 2. He needed to make it to the cross to pay for our sins.***

### **Self-control and our bodies**

- Genesis 2:9 “And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.” *God made us to enjoy pleasures – pleasant both to our senses and our appetites. God intends that we enjoy the physical things of his life.* 1 Timothy 6:17 “God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.”
- Sin has corrupted our desires. Now, things God intended for us to enjoy have become our masters.
  - ***Self-control keeps good things from becoming our master.***
    - What are some examples of good things that can become our master? Why do we allow them to become our master? What does it mean to have something as our master? (anything good can become our master even things beautiful in God's eyes like marriage or children. We allow them to become our master because we either use them to drown out other feelings or things going on in our life or we tie so much of life's value and our own view of ourselves to how things go in with a certain thing. Having something as our master means that we are acting in some way as though we are serving it, whether that is orchestrating our time around it or getting to it whenever we can or boasting in/finding our identity in it. Essentially, if something is our master it is in control which means we are not in control when it comes to this certain area, hence the lack of self-control is always present.)
- **Self-control of the body is primarily aimed at 3 things: 1. Gluttony (in food and drink), 2. Laziness, and 3. Sexual immorality and impurity.**
  - Gluttony is making food or drink an idol.
    - What does gluttony look like in someone's life? (drunkenness, over-indulgence of food or drinks, using food to comfort/pacify/relieve stress/deal with emotions)
    - What might just a tiny little bit of gluttony look like in someone's life or in our own lives? (not being able to say no to food or drink)

- How is food or drink our master in this situation? (we obey it/can't say no to it, we make time for it, we indulge at the expense of more important things)
- What are some more important things that suffer as we indulge in food or drink? (having a sober mind, health, treating our bodies as a temple/honoring God with our bodies, our ability to fast [which God expects])
- What are some ways we can combat gluttony? (fasting, prayer, Bible)
- Our relationship with food is so important. If we can't say no to food, how will we say no to sin? This is why fasting is a strong weapon against not only gluttony but against all sin.
- Laziness – What is our master in this situation? (rest, comfort, relaxing)
  - What does laziness look like in someone's life? (lot of time with TV/screens, oversleeping, less and less time engaging the mind)
  - How is rest our master in these situations? (we make time for it, we can't say no to it, we indulge in more of it at the expense of more important things)
  - What are some more important things that suffer as we indulge in rest? (time with God, time with family, our mental sharpness, etc.)
  - Mark 1:35 "And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed." Jesus had a full day previously. We often prize rest or sleeping in OVER spending time with God.
  - Some people have the opposite problem. Being ultra-productive can also be a lack of self-control. Psalm 127:2 "It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep." Productivity can also become our master and have just as devastating effects on our time with God as laziness.
- Sexual self-control – God's standard is absolute abstinence outside of marriage. Hebrews 13:4 "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."
  - Sexual self-control also includes impure thoughts, lustful looks, and suggestive speech. [Matthew 5:28, Ephesians 5:12]
- Whose help do we need to grow in these areas? (God's through His holy spirit)
- Prayer Requests

**For Next Time: - Fill out attached study sheet on 1 Peter 2:23-35 for next week.**

### **Self-control Memory Verses (pick at least 1)**

- 1 Peter 2:23 "When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."
- Proverbs 24:16 "the righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity."

- Prayer
- Review Memory Verse List – Discuss one of them
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 23: Why must the Redeemer be truly God? That because of his divine nature his obedience and suffering would be perfect and effective. (Acts 2:24)
  - Question 24: Why was it necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to die? Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God. (Colossians 1:21-22)
- ***Self-control is a combination of sound judgment and inner strength that governs your desires.***
- ***God the Father's self-control is important because 1. He is patient that we might be saved and 2. He allows to go through hard things to become more like Christ.***
- ***Jesus' self-control is important because 1. He needed to be sinless to pay for our sins and 2. He needed to make it to the cross to pay for our sins.***
- ***Self-control over our bodies involves gluttony, laziness, and sexuality and prevents good things from becoming our masters.***

### **Taking Captive Every Thought**

- 2 Corinthians 10:5 says we should “take every thought captive to obey Christ”. What do you think this means? What does taking something captive mean? (it is your prisoner > you make it do what you want, you have the power over it rather than the other way around)
  - What examples come to mind of what it would or would not look like to take a thought captive? (indulging impure thoughts vs. putting impure thoughts out of your mind)
  - Taking our thoughts captive means to entertain only thoughts that are acceptable to God.
    - What is the difference between entertaining a thought versus not entertaining it? (entertaining a thought would be to dwell on or indulge in the feeling it gives you from thinking about it, we get a feeling from thinking about it similar to a feeling we would get from actually acting out that thought. Not entertaining a thought would be to not indulge, cast out of your mind, fighting it with truth from God's word.)
    - Impure thoughts will come into our minds. This is not sin. The question is, what do we do with those thoughts? What we do with those thoughts is what makes it sin.
    - What kind of thoughts would be unacceptable to God? (thoughts that are degrading of people or God, thoughts that are self-exalting/proud) Acceptable? (thoughts that uplift people or God, thoughts that are humble towards ourselves, thoughts about good things that God has created for us to enjoy without making those good things an idol)
- Read Philippians 4:8. What kinds of thoughts would fall into these categories (listed below)?
  - True; honorable; just; pure; lovely; commendable; excellence; worthy of praise.
  - Self-control, then, is more than just avoiding sinful thoughts but focusing our thoughts on that which is good and pleasing to God.



- Our minds our mental greenhouses where sinful thoughts, once planted, are nurtured and watered before being transplanted into the real world of sinful actions. Sinful actions are savored in the mind long before they are done in reality. Our thought life is our first line of defense in the battle of self-control.
  - Guarding our thoughts is one of best ways to guard our actions and our tongues. Jesus says in Matthew 12:34-35, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the vil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil."
- The gates to our thoughts are primarily our eyes and ears. What we see, read, and hear largely determine what we think. Since this is the case, guarding our thoughts begins primarily with guarding what? (our eyes and ears)
  - What are some things we should protect our eyes and ears from? (sexuality, materialism, envy, selfish ambition, cursing, anger, etc. > and any TV/literature/conversations that arouse such thoughts)
    - Paul says in 1 Timothy 6:11 to *FLEE* from temptation.
  - **Does anyone have examples of this in their lives where your thoughts changed when your circumstances or what you see/hear changed?**
- Hearing how other people talk can also influence our thought life. What kinds of things do we hear in other people's conversations that are sinful? (cursing, gossip, slander, criticism, mocking, etc.)
  - What are some things we can do to escape from hearing these kinds of things?
  - Keep in mind that sometimes this (escaping) is not always possible, but we should prioritize it because *It is impossible to listen to impure talk and then only think pure thoughts.*
- What are some thoughts you think that you would never [think you would] act out in real life?
  - What are some examples you can think of someone acting out something they probably never thought they would do when they first started thinking about it?
  - What are some excuses we can give for allowing something in our thoughts that we wouldn't allow in our actions? (it doesn't hurt anyone, no one can see my thoughts, it makes me feel better/appeases me)
  - What would our response be to someone who says our thoughts don't hurt anyone? (our thoughts corrupt ourselves and will eventually transplant into actions which will hurt others. God also knows our thoughts > See Psalm 139:2/1 Chronicles 28:9)
- How is God able and willing to help us with our self-control? (speaking through his word, strengthening by the holy spirit, wisdom to have sound judgement, gives us inner strength, encourage us through other believers, answering our prayers, etc.)
- Prayer Requests

**For Next Time: - Work on your memory verse. Add another if you can!**

**- Read Chapter 11 of the book, "Self-control".**

**Self-control Memory Verses (pick at least 1)**

- Prayer
- Review Memory Verse List – Discuss one of them
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 25: Does Christ's death mean all our sins can be forgiven? Yes, because Christ's death on the cross fully paid the penalty for our sin, God will remember our sins no more. (2 Cor. 5:21)
  - Question 26: What else does Christ's death redeem? Every part of fallen creation (Col. 1:19-20)

***- Self-control is a combination of sound judgment and inner strength that governs your desires.***

***- God the Father's self-control is important because 1. He is patient that we might be saved and 2. He allows to go through hard things to become more like Christ.***

***- Jesus' self-control is important because 1. He needed to be sinless to pay for our sins and 2. He needed to make it to the cross to pay for our sins.***

***- Self-control over our bodies involves gluttony, laziness, and sexuality and prevents good things from becoming our masters.***

***- Self-control over our thoughts entertains/dwells on only thoughts that are acceptable to God.***

### **Curbing our Emotions**

- Emotions that need to be controlled include: anger/rage, resentment/bitterness, and self-pity.
  - What do each of these emotions entail/mean?
  - These feelings may be explosive or only simmering, but are displeasing to God in either case.
- Anger: An uncontrolled temper is a contradiction in the life of someone seeking to practice godliness.
  - Anger is a unique challenge because many ungoverned thoughts and emotions are in our own minds whereas an uncontrolled temper damages others, creates bitterness, and destroys relationships.
  - Proverbs 16:32 "Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit (i.e. control his temper) than he who takes a city." One person said based on this verse, "Defeating a city is child's play compared with the wrestling with one's own temper."
    - *To have a temper that requires control is not sin; the fail to control it is sin.*
  - What are some things we get angry over? Why? What are we valuing in those moments?
  - What would it look like for someone with a temper control their anger? What are some things that might help control our own anger?
  - How can we grow in self-control of our anger? What are some promises of God we can focus on when fighting anger?
- Resentment/bitterness: Resentment or bitterness is being upset over having been treated unfairly. It is an emotion that slowly simmers over time. It is displeasing to God, harmful to ourselves, and will eventually boil over into actions. What are some examples of situations that might lead to resentment?

- The temptation to resentment/bitterness is not sin, but nurturing those feelings towards others is.
- What are we valuing most when we are feeling resentful?
- What are some promises of God that we can focus on to fight resentment?
- Self-pity: Self-pity is unhappiness over one's own troubles. Self-pity is a "weak pride" which means we use weakness as a means of exalting ourselves or getting attention and praise from others. What are some examples of situations that might lead to self-pity?
  - The temptation to self-pity is not sin, but nurturing those feelings about ourselves is.
  - What are we valuing most when we are feeling self-pity?
  - What are some promises of God that we can focus on to fight self-pity?
- All of these sinful inner emotions have in common a focus on self. All of these things are pride. They put our disappointments, our wounded pride, or our shattered dreams on the thrones of our hearts where they become idols to us.
  - What would it look like to nurture these emotions versus subduing them?
  - How does God help us in this?

- Prayer Requests

**For Next Time: - Work on your memory verse. Add another if you can!**

**- Read Chapter 11 of the book, "Self-control".**

### **Self-control Memory Verses (pick at least 1)**

- 1 Peter 2:23 "When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."
- Proverbs 24:16 "the righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity."
- 1 Corinthians 9:25 "Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable."
- Luke 9:23 "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."
- Proverbs 25:28 "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls."

- Prayer
- Review Memory Verse List – Discuss one of them
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 29: How can we be saved? Only by faith in Jesus Christ and in his substitutionary atoning death on the cross. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
  - Question 30: What is faith in Jesus Christ? Receiving and resting on him alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel. (Galatians 2:20)

### **Faithfulness**

- Discuss what you think of when you think of faithfulness.
- Faithfulness is a theme throughout the entire Bible, Genesis to Revelation. Look at the following verses. What does each say about faithfulness?
  - Deuteronomy 28:1 “And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.” (faithfulness here involves obedience to God. It means to follow without deviating or to have **unswerving loyalty**. We faithfully obey God by doing all he has commanded us. We can translate that to being faithful to others in authority over us > we are faithful in obedience if we obey what we’ve been commanded by teacher/parents/government/etc.)
  - 2 Chronicles 31:12 “And they faithfully brought in the contributions, the tithes, and the dedicated things.” (faithfulness involves being committed to honoring the Lord with our wealth)
  - Psalm 26:3 “For your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in your faithfulness.” (God’s faithfulness to us enables us to walk with Him)
  - Psalm 40:10 “I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation.” (we are meant to declare the faithfulness of God and praise Him for it and tell others about it)
  - Psalm 100:5 “For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.” (God’s faithfulness will never end, unchanging)
  - Psalm 111:7 “The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy” (everything God does He does in faithfulness > even hard things)
  - Psalm 119:75 “I know, O Lord, that your rules are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.” (as above, even hard things in our lives is God being faithful to us in making us more like Jesus Christ)
  - Proverbs 14:5 “A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness breathes out lies.” (faithfulness is honesty)
  - Proverbs 20:6 “Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find?” (many people profess faithfulness but very few demonstrate it)
  - 1 Corinthians 4:2 “Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.” (Faithfulness here talks about being a good steward of what we are entrusted with. A steward is someone who has been entrusted with something to take care of that is not their own. It belongs to someone else but is our responsibility to care for.

This entails everything in our lives. Whether that is time/possessions/money/relationships, we are using those things in a way that shows respect and love to the one who gave them to us - God.)

- 1 Corinthians 10:13 "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." (God's faithfulness helps us in temptation)

- Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." (faithfulness is a fruit of the Spirit which means we can't grow in it on our own, we must put forth effort but must also depend on God to work it in us)

- 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it." (Faithfulness is to do what you said you would do, God is faithful to sanctify us completely and present us before him blameless at the end of time as we stand before the throne of God. We will be perfect if we are united to Jesus by faith BECAUSE God is faithful. His faithfulness is the ground of all the good things we receive in Jesus)

- 2 Thessalonians 3:3 "But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one." (God's faithfulness protects us from the attacks of the devil. For example, Luke 22:31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail."  
- beautiful)

- 2 Timothy 2:2 "what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." (faithfulness involves teaching others about God. Who are we sharing what we are learning and what God is teaching us with?)

- Hebrews 11:11 "By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised." (faithfulness keeps promises)

- Revelation 19:11 "Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war." (faithful is Jesus' name, it is who God is. What is God? He is faithful.)

**- Definition: Faithfulness is to be dependable and loyal in all relationships and absolutely honest and ethical in all the affairs of life.**

- So, faithfulness involves relationships and the affairs of life – which is everything.

- What are some examples of things faithfulness plays a part of in our lives? (money, possessions, relationships, time, loyalty/dependability, being on time, keep commitments, honor your word, honesty, consider how actions will affect others, etc.)

- Is our culture marked by faithfulness or faithlessness? In what ways is this so? (faithlessness, our lack of commitment to each other and to honesty. We live in a progressively individualistic world where "I" am the only thing that matters and so I am not loyal to anyone else or dependable for anyone else. This is where the church should shine > "By this they will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" [John 13:35] This is a faithful love. This culture is also deeply dishonest where gain at the expense of anything else is celebrated even if it is morally wrong. We must remember Proverbs 10:2 "Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit.")

- Why is faithfulness important? (It takes part in every single area of our lives. It is a witness to others about who God is. It is what God has called us to be. It is who God is. God's faithfulness is vital to our salvation, deliverance from temptation, sanctification, forgiveness, deliverance through suffering, and fulfillment of our ultimate hope of eternal life. Etc.)

- Prayer
- Review Memory Verse List – Discuss one of them
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 31: What do we believe by true faith? We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. (Anyone know what this answer is? Apostles’ Creed)

### **Review**

- ***Faithfulness is to be dependable and loyal in all relationships and absolutely honest and ethical in all the affairs of life.***

### **God’s Faithfulness**

- The entire Bible reflects on God’s faithfulness. It is impossible to describe God’s acts without talking about his faithfulness.
- These are the first 5 principles of God’s faithfulness.

#### **1. God’s faithfulness will never end.**

- Psalm 100:5 “For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.”
- Why won’t God’s faithfulness ever end? (He has promised, because He is unchanging His characteristics won’t change, it is who He is)
- What has God done to prove that His faithfulness won’t end? (sending Jesus to purchase us for good, demonstrating his love towards His people constantly through the Bible, never going back on something He has promised, giving us His Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it [Ephesians 1:13-14], giving us the Bible to guide us until we are with Him in eternity, etc.)
- Why is it important that his faithfulness never ends? (it wouldn’t be faithfulness if it could end, if it could end then that means God could change and no attribute of God would be unchanging, it could mean that His love is unfaithful or his mercy or grace or forgiveness or anything we need God to be would be unfaithful and not there for us when we need it, we would perish forever the very instant that God stops being faithful, etc.)

#### **2. God’s faithfulness allows trials into our lives.**

- Psalm 119:75 “I know, O Lord, that your rules are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.”
- Talk about what this verse means. (God is the one governs our afflictions, he has some loving purpose behind affliction which is to make us more like Jesus, He does not want us to be in pain but he wants us to grow [Hebrews 12:11, Prov. 3:11-12, Lam. 3:32-33], it could also mean that He is always faithful to restore us from our affliction and to have compassion on us [Lam. 3:32-33], etc.)

- Why is it important to know that God is the one who allows affliction in our lives? (Because we must know that God is sovereign over all things including afflictions, nothing happens without God allowing it, if He were not the one who allowed affliction we would be at the mercy of sin and the devil, nothing catches God by surprise, though bad things happen to us the God who cares for us deeply and is faithful and steadfast in His love towards us is the one directing those bad things so that they ultimately result in good [Rom. 8:28])

- Why is it comforting to us that our trials come to us through the filter of God's faithfulness? (we can trust that it will work out for good [Rom. 8:28], we know that our pain won't be wasted, we know that trusting God through trials will always sustain us [1 Pet. 4:19], God is working out in our lives the difference between good/better/best for us (and always does what's best), etc.)

### **3. God's faithfulness helps us in temptation.**

- 1 Corinthians 10:13 "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

- What is temptation? (being allured to act/say/think something that is sin which means it either does not love God or does not love people)

- Why do we need help in temptation? (because we are still in sinful flesh [though we are saved] we are unable on our own to fight temptation, we need God's help to resist sin, sin is so enticing that we would fall for it if left to fight temptation on our own, etc.)

- What does God do faithfully that helps us? (he does not let us be tempted beyond what we are able to withstand, he provides a way of escape, He gives us the Holy Spirit to empower us to be able to do the withstanding and escaping, He gives us the Bible to teach us how to withstand and escape and to transform our minds so that sin becomes disgusting to us, basically He helps us resist sin by working in us [Word/Spirit] and in our situation [not giving us something that would be impossible to resist], etc.)

### **4. God's faithfulness guards us against the devil.**

- 2 Thessalonians 3:3 "But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one."

- What is the devil trying to do to us? See 1 Peter 5:8. (devour us > lead us to sin, lead us to turn away from God, lead us to doubt God's goodness and promises and character, destroy us in hell)

- How does God help us? (He reminds us of our being united to Christ and our salvation [establishes us] so that we turn from sin, He guards us from the devil's attacks/temptations by using the Spirit and the Word transforming our minds and our character so that we don't doubt God or turn away from Him, He exercises sovereign control over the devil)

- Why do we need God's help to resist the devil? (we are weak in our sinful flesh, we can't resist Him without God working in us, we need His Spirit and His Word ministering to our hearts)

### **5. God's faithfulness keeps His promises.**

- Hebrews 11:11 "By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised."

- What kinds of promises has God made? (everything will work out for good, if we are united to Christ by faith we will be saved, heaven awaits His people, He will sanctify us to become more like Jesus, He is with us always, He has authority over all things, nothing can separate us from His love, etc.)

- What kinds of things has God not promised? (health, wealth, prosperity, specific circumstance in your life, spouse, career, family, what you want your life to look like, no hard things, no pain, etc.)

- How does knowing that God keeps his promises change how we live? (we have the freedom to take risks > witnessing/missions/costly love/sacrificing for God and others/giving away what we have/etc., we know He will keep us to the end so we can take up our cross daily to follow Him and do whatever we can to help others follow Him, etc.)

- Which one of these sticks out to you as most impactful in your life?
- Which of these areas have you never really thought about before?
- How will meditating on these aspects of God's faithfulness help you?

- Prayer Requests

**For Next Time: - Work on your memory verse. Add another if you can!**

**- Read Chapter 12 of the book, "Faithfulness".**

**Faithfulness Memory Verses (pick at least 1)**

- Proverbs 20:6 "Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find?"
- Matthew 25:21 "'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'"
- Lamentations 3:22-23 "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."
- Psalm 86:15 "But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."
- 1 Corinthians 4:2 "it is required of stewards that they be found faithful."
- 1 Corinthians 10:13 "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."
- 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."



- Prayer
- Review Memory Verse List – Discuss one of them
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 32: What do justification and sanctification mean? Justification means our declared righteousness before God. Sanctification means our gradual, growing righteousness.
- (1 Peter 1:1-2)
- Question 33: Should those who have faith in Christ seek their salvation through their own works, or anywhere else? No, everything necessary to salvation is found in Christ.
- (Galatians 2:16)

### **Review**

- ***Faithfulness is to be dependable and loyal in all relationships and absolutely honest and ethical in all the affairs of life.***
- ***God’s faithfulness 1. Never ends, 2. Allows trials, 3. Helps in temptation, 4. Guards against the devil, and 5. Keeps promises.***

### **God’s Faithfulness**

- These are the next 5 principles of God’s faithfulness.

#### **6. God’s faithfulness saves us.**

- 1 Corinthians 1:9 “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”
- What does it mean to be called into fellowship with Jesus? (that God brings us into relationship with Jesus Christ, He uses the Holy Spirit to draw us to himself, He uses the preaching of the gospel to awaken our hearts, He applies the gospel to our hearts so that we believe, He opens our eyes to see Jesus as beautiful)
- Is everyone called? (there are 2 calls> 1. The gospel/general call which is offered to everyone which says “come to me”, and 2. The effectual call of God that actually saves those who accept His offer. Everyone receives the first call, but only Christians receive the second effectual call.)
  - Which of the 2 callings [gospel/general and effectual] does this verse talk about? (effectual > since the result of this call is union and fellowship with Jesus Christ aka salvation)
  - What is the gospel that everyone is called to believe? (GOSPEL)
- What does it mean to be in fellowship with Jesus Christ? (that we are united with Him through believing that He died for our sins. We then walk with Him in our lives as He changes us to become more like Him.)
- Why is God’s faithfulness important in light of this verse? (we would not be saved without his faithfulness, He has to be faithful to work in us that which he calls us to, it isn’t an empty call, He is faithful to keep fellowship with us)

#### **7. God’s faithfulness sanctifies us.**

- 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it."
- Pop quiz: which calling are we referring to here, gospel/general or effectual? (effectual)
- What is sanctification? (see catechism question, the little by little transformation of our lives to become more like Christ, being transformed "from one degree of glory to the next")
- Why do we need to be sanctified? (because though we have salvation we are still sinful/dirty and need God to clean us up, it is how we become more like Jesus which is the primary thing God is trying to accomplish in our lives)
- How does God sanctify us? (Holy Spirit, Word, other people, trials and difficulties in our lives)

## **8. God's faithfulness forgives our sins.**

- 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- What does it mean to confess our sins? (to recognize sin for what it is and to ask God for forgiveness and help in turning from that sin)
- Why do we need to keep confessing our sins if Jesus already paid the price for them? (sin loses power when we name it for what it is, it allows us to grow in our relationship with God > sin hinders our fellowship with God, it opens the pathway for God to show mercy to us [Proverbs 28:13 > whoever confesses sin receives mercy])
- How does God's faithfulness to forgive sins comfort and encourage us? (He is always there for us even if we mess up, His patience won't run out, We can always go to him without fear that He will turn us away, it encourages us to keep trying to live for Him [even in bold ways] since we know that if something goes sideways He will help us)

## **9. God's faithfulness helps us in suffering.**

- 1 Peter 4:19 "Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good."
- What is God faithful to do in our suffering? (keep us in His love [Rom. 8:38-39: nothing can separate us from the Love of God] > He will give us everything we need to keep believing in Him, He is faithful to use our suffering for his glory and for our good [rom 8:28] to become more like Him, strengthen our hearts, speak into our circumstances through His Word, encourage us through other people)
- Suffering can make us question God's goodness and love for us, so His faithfulness leads us to trust our souls and lives to Him even in hard circumstances.

## **10. God's faithfulness will keep us to the end.**

- Hebrews 10:23 "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful."
- What is God promising to do in this verse? (make sure our holding fast holds fast, get us to the hope that He has laid forth for us in Christ > eternity with Him in heaven)
- Who has what responsibility in our holding fast to Jesus? (we have the responsibility to hold fast to our confession of Jesus Christ, God's faithfulness makes sure we continue to hold fast)
- Why do we need God's faithfulness in order to keep believing in Jesus to the end of our lives? (the world, flesh, and devil are all powerful influences trying to pull us away and we could never walk the Christian life on our

own, we need God to keep us every moment, every day that we wake up believing in Jesus we can thank God for his faithfulness to us)

- If we are believing in Jesus Christ, we can trust God's faithfulness to keep us to the end. Philippians 1:6 "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

- Which one of these sticks out to you as most impactful in your life?
  - Which of these areas have you never really thought about before?
  - How will meditating on these aspects of God's faithfulness help you?
- Prayer Requests

**For Next Time: - Work on your memory verse. Add another if you can!**

**- Read Chapter 12 of the book, "Faithfulness".**

**Faithfulness Memory Verses (pick at least 1)**

- Proverbs 20:6 "Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find?"
- Matthew 25:21 "'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'"
- Lamentations 3:22-23 "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."
- Psalm 86:15 "But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."
- 1 Corinthians 4:2 "it is required of stewards that they be found faithful."
- 1 Corinthians 10:13 "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."
- 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- Prayer
- Review Memory Verse List – Discuss one of them
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 34: Since we are redeemed by grace alone, through Christ alone, must we still do good works and obey God's Word? Yes, so that our lives may show love and gratitude to God; and so that by our godly behavior others may be won to Christ. (1 Peter 2:9-12)
  - Question 35: Since we are redeemed by grace alone, through faith alone, where does this faith come from? All the gifts we receive from Christ we receive through the Holy Spirit, including faith itself. (Titus 3:4-6)

### **Review**

- ***Faithfulness is to be dependable and loyal in all relationships and absolutely honest and ethical in all the affairs of life.***
- ***God's faithfulness 1. Never ends, 2. Allows trials, 3. Helps in temptation, 4. Guards against the devil, 5. Keeps promises, 6. Saves us, 7. Sanctifies us, 8. Forgives us, 9. Helps in suffering, and 10. Will keep us to the end.***

### **Faithfulness: Absolute Honesty**

- Lying has been defined as "any deceit: in word, act, attitude or silence; in deliberate exaggerations, in distortions of the truth, or in creating false impressions."
  - What kinds of situations/specific examples does this definition of lying include? (generally: what we say, what we do, what we portray with our attitude, what we don't say, what we exaggerate to give a false impression, to twist the truth, to mislead in the impression we give in any way)
  - What are some ways we do any of these things in our lives?
- God's thoughts about lying:
  - Leviticus 19:11 "You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another."
    - What three things are being forbidden here? (stealing, lie to take advantage of people [specifically in business/monetary transactions], telling lies)
    - What are some ways we steal besides just taking something from someone? (at our jobs>lying about what we work [punching in/out] or being lazy at work [which would be stealing from our employer], not giving our offerings to God [Malachi 3:8-10>robbing God], others?)
    - What are some specific examples of what "dealing falsely" might look like? (deceiving to try and pay less or make more money in a transaction>i.e. complaining about something just to try and get something free or cheaper, lying on your tax return, not being completely honest about something you are trying to sell, etc.)
      - Proverbs 11:1 "A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight."
      - What is a false balance or just weight referring to? (how we do business > similar to dealing falsely as above, weights and balances were used in the marketplace to determine how much

was being sold and so how much to charge, a false balance overcharged people for what they were getting, a just weight was honest)

- Proverbs 12:22 “Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are his delight.” Also read Proverbs 6:16-19.

- How does God feel about lying lips? (HATE, an abomination is the strongest word that could be used, Lying is 2 of the 7 things God hates in Proverbs 6)

- What is the opposite of having lying lips in Proverbs 12:22? (acting faithfully)

- What are some situations where it is really easy for us to lie?

- What should be more important in those situations than what we stand to gain by lying? (our character, honoring God, representing Him)

- Giving False Impressions

- What are some ways that we give false impressions about things?

- What kinds of things do we hope to gain by giving false impressions? Why do we do it?

- In those moments, what are we valuing? Not valuing?

- Why is giving a false impression about something lying? (it is deception, we are misleading someone trying to make them think something that is not true)

- Takeaway: Honesty in every small detail of life in every little thing we say or don't say, do or don't do, or give the impression of is important to God.

- What are some specific areas of your life where you think you have opportunity to grow in honesty?

- How do we grow in honesty? (power of the Holy Spirit, prayer, being in the Word, fellowship with other believers)

- Prayer Requests

**For Next Time: - Work on your memory verse. Add another if you can!**

**- Read Chapter 12 of the book, “Faithfulness”.**

**Faithfulness Memory Verses (pick at least 1)**

- Proverbs 20:6 “Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find?”

- Matthew 25:21 “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.”

- Prayer
- Review Memory Verse List – Discuss one of them
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 36: What do we believe about the Holy Spirit? That he is God, coeternal with the Father and the Son. (John 14:16-17)
  - Question 37: How does the Holy Spirit help us? The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin, and he enables us to pray and to understand God's Word. (Ephesians 6:17-18)

### **Review**

- ***Faithfulness is to be dependable and loyal in all relationships and absolutely honest and ethical in all the affairs of life.***
- ***God's faithfulness 1. Never ends, 2. Allows trials, 3. Helps in temptation, 4. Guards against the devil, 5. Keeps promises, 6. Saves us, 7. Sanctifies us, 8. Forgives us, 9. Helps in suffering, and 10. Will keep us to the end.***
- ***Faithfulness involves absolute honesty in all areas of life.***

### **Faithfulness: Utter Dependability**

- What kind of characteristics would describe someone who is not dependable? What kinds of things would an undependable person do or not do?
  - What are some ways we do the same things?
- Proverbs 10:26 says "Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him."
  - What is a sluggard? (someone who is habitually lazy, completely unreliable, can't be trusted to do anything)
  - Why is a sluggard so exasperating? (the fact that they are unfaithful, the fact that we have to rely on them – if we didn't have to rely on them it wouldn't bother us but if we are dependent on their actions their slothfulness is complete unfaithfulness)
  - What negative impact does a sluggard have on the different communities we are a part of [church, family, school, work]?
  - Think this week what areas you tend to be a sluggard, we don't need to answer this out loud but it's a good thing to think about occasionally.
- Dependability in our culture has taken a backseat to personal desire or convenience. "I'll keep that commitment if it's convenient".
  - What are some responsibilities we might have that we view as something we will only do if it suits us or if it is convenient?
- Unfaithfulness is disobedience. If we live without keeping our word or obligations we are acting as though we are our own masters and are subject to no one, including God.
  - Dependability then is a duty owed not only to man, but to God. How does being dependable towards others reflect our view of God? (if we are committed to what God values we show Him worth valuing, if we can't be

subject to our own commitments or word how can we be committed to God's commands?, it reflects who He is  
> it is a picture to others of what God is like, being committed to our word loves other people which is God's primary command)

- Read Psalm 15. This Psalm asks, "Who shall dwell on [God's] holy hill?"

- Verse 4 says that this person "swears to his own hurt and does not change".

- What does this mean? (that even if it causes us harm in some way we keep our word and commitments)

- What are some ways that keeping our word or commitment to something might hurt us or be inconvenient for us?

- What are some examples of situations where we might be tempted to break a commitment because of negative or inconvenient consequences of keeping our word?

- How did, does, and will Jesus demonstrate his utter dependability to us? (he went to the cross for our sins so that the payment of our debt would be forever dependably paid, he continues to intercede on our behalf, he will come back to secure for us everything he promised)

- Prayer Requests

**For Next Time: - Work on your memory verse. Add another if you can!**

- Read Chapter 12 of the book, "Faithfulness".

**Faithfulness Memory Verses (pick at least 1)**

- Proverbs 20:6 "Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find?"

- Matthew 25:21 "'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'"

- Lamentations 3:22-23 "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

- Psalm 86:15 "But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."

- 1 Corinthians 4:2 "it is required of stewards that they be found faithful."

- 1 Corinthians 10:13 "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

## Youth Sunday School – What is Peace? – 9/20/20

- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 3: How many persons are there in God? There are three persons in the one true and living God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are the same in substance, equal in power and glory. (2 Corinthians 13:14)
  - Question 4: How and why did God create us? God created us male and female in his own image to know him, love him, live with him, and glorify him. And it is right that we who were created by God should live to his glory. (Genesis 1:27)
- Review Memory Verse List – Discuss one of them

### **Peace**

- Discuss what you think of when you think of peace.
  - Peace is a theme throughout the entire Bible, Genesis to Revelation. Look at the following verses. What does each say about peace?
1. Genesis 37:4 “But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.” (hate and peace do not coexist, peace is a way we can speak to others)
  2. Genesis 43:23 “He replied, “Peace to you, do not be afraid.” (peace is the opposite of fear)
  3. Leviticus 22:21 “And when anyone offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the Lord to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering from the herd or from the flock, to be accepted it must be perfect; there shall be no blemish in it.” (the Israelites offered peace offerings which were either to fulfill a vow [which Hannah did when Samuel was born in 1 Samuel] or as a voluntary [freewill] offering, the offering of peace had to be perfect. This foreshadows Christ who as the perfect sacrifice is our peace offering if we accept him.)
  4. Leviticus 26:6 “I (God) will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid.” (God gives peace, peace is something the land can have, peace includes not being afraid)
  5. Numbers 6:26 “the Lord lift up his countenance (face) upon you and give you peace.” (the Lord gives peace, it is associated with the Lord’s favor [lifting up his face upon you])
  6. Deuteronomy 20:12 “But if it (a city) makes no peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it.” (peace is the opposite of war)
  7. Judges 6:23-24 “But the Lord said to him, ‘Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die.’ Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and called it, The Lord Is Peace (Yahweh-Shalom).” (peace involves not fearing [again] and specifically here not fearing death. Peace is what God is)
  8. 1 Kings 2:33 “But for David and for his descendants and for his house and for his throne there shall be peace from the Lord forevermore.” (some group of people will have peace forever, the Lord gives peace, peace is what the people in the OT longed for, they always had war and were looking over their shoulder constantly which we don’t fully understand since America has generally had little to fear in terms of other nations)
  9. 2 Kings 22:20 “Therefore, behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring upon this place.” (peace avoids seeing disaster)



10. Psalm 4:8 "In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." (the Lord gives peace, peace is equated here to safety, peace is so comforting that we can lay down and go to sleep [which is very vulnerable] without worrying)
11. Psalm 119:165 "Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble." (peace gives some kind of security to your life [nothing can make you stumble], peace comes through the Word of God [loving his law])
12. Isaiah 53:5 "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed." (Jesus' death brought us peace, we have no peace apart from Jesus [why? Will be looked at later but because we do not have peace if God's wrath remains on us])
13. Isaiah 57:21 "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked." (the wicked will not have peace, by implication the righteous will have peace)
14. Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (making peace characterizes God's children)
15. Mark 4:39 "And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." (peace is calm and stillness, Jesus gives peace and has the power to command peace in chaos)
16. John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. (Jesus gives peace, the opposite of peace would be being troubled or afraid, this peace is true peace and not what the world offers up as a cheap substitute for peace that doesn't last)
17. Romans 5:1 "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (if we are justified [counted righteous] through belief in Jesus [faith] we have peace with God, before being saved we do not have peace with God [why? His wrath is upon us], Jesus brings peace)
18. Romans 12:18 "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." (we want to be at peace with all people, sometimes it is out of our control [as far as it depends on you])
19. 1 Corinthians 14:33 "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace." (peace is the opposite of confusion)
20. Galatians 5:22 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness..." (peace grows in us only by the power of the Holy Spirit, this means we must be saved [and therefore have the Spirit in us] in order to grow in peace)
21. Philippians 4:6-7 "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (peace is the opposite of anxiety, peace comes to us through prayer, peace is given by God, peace guards our hearts and minds)
22. Colossians 3:15 "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" (peace is Jesus' to gives, we must let peace into our hearts, peace is something we want to rule in our hearts)
23. Hebrews 12:14 "Strive for peace with everyone" (we must work to have peace with others, we want to be at peace with everyone, we will ultimately not have peace with everyone but we must strive for it)

- Common themes of peace in the Bible

1. God is a god of \_\_\_\_\_. (peace)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ is the giver of peace. (God/Jesus)
3. Peace is the opposite of: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.  
(hate, fear, war, disaster, trouble, confusion, anxiety)

4. Unbelievers need \_\_\_\_\_ to be at peace with God. (Jesus)
5. As Christians, peace grows in us through the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_. (Bible, prayer, and Holy Spirit)
6. Who should we strive to be at peace with? \_\_\_\_\_. (everyone [including God])

**- Definition: *Peace is freedom from God's wrath and freedom from turmoil within ourselves and with others.***

- How do we get freedom from God's wrath? (faith in Jesus Christ [can expound], God is at war with sin and anyone under its reign. When we don't believe [have peace] with God we are in a state of war against him)
- What kinds of attitudes or emotions might we feel if we are having "inner turmoil"? (several of the things listed above>fear, anxiety, confusion, hate, anger, distress)
- What might hate-filled relationships look like? (slander/name-calling, anger/bitterness towards someone, gossip, physical violence, holding a grudge, jealousy/rivalries, dissension/divisions, etc.)
- Is our culture marked by peace or lack thereof? In what ways is this so? (no peace, generally do not believe in Jesus so no peace with God, our world is a very anxious/confused/fearful/distressed world [the rates of drug [legal and illegal] use and abuse/suicide illustrate this], the hate that people have for one another is continuing to grow [illustrated in our country by racial/ideological/political divisions])
- Why is peace important? (Most importantly it means we do not have God's just wrath coming our way. Peace signifies the most important reality in the universe, that Jesus Christ died to save sinners. Peace is also important because it is a reflection of our trust in God to take care of all the things we might be worried about. We trust him to handle and protect us from what might make us anxious or afraid. We trust him to give justice to all those who have hurt us in relationships. [Romans 14:19-21, vengeance is the Lord's, do not repay evil for evil]. Peace is an amazing reality when we have it and God wants us to have it. He wants us to be able to "lie down and sleep" and to have "nothing that can make us stumble". He wants us to not be anxious [being anxious stinks!] and to not have terrible relationships with people [which also stink!]. God loves us so much and the fact that he wants us to have peace signifies this. He wants us to feel an inner calm/stillness even when our life circumstances are difficult.)

- Prayer Requests

**For Next Time: - Read Chapter 13 of Practice of Godliness, "Peace".**

***- Keep memorizing the verse you've chosen.***

## Youth Sunday School – God the Father and Peace – 9/27/20 (Leader)

- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 5: What else did God create? God created all things by his powerful Word, and all his creation was very good; everything flourished under his loving rule. (Genesis 1:31)
  - Question 6: How can we glorify God? We glorify God by enjoying him, loving him, trusting him, and by obeying his will, commands, and law. (Deuteronomy 11:1)
- Review Memory Verse List – Discuss one of them

### **Review**

- Without looking, what is peace?
- What were some of the common themes of peace we saw in the Bible? (God is a god of peace, God is the giver of peace, peace is the opposite of hate/war/fear/disaster/trouble/confusion/anxiety, Unbelievers need Jesus to be at peace with God, As Christians peace grows in us through the Bible, prayer and the Holy Spirit, We should strive to be at peace with everyone)
- **Definition: Peace is freedom from God's wrath and freedom from turmoil within ourselves and with others.**

### **The God of Peace**

#### **1. God is peace.**

Judges 6:24 "Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and called it, The Lord Is Peace."

Romans 15:33 "May the God of peace be with you all."

- Peace is a God-like trait. God is peace and peaceful. Peace is who he is. Why might it be important that we serve a God of peace? (if our God were not a god of peace we would only have fear/anxiety/confusion/turmoil towards him, we would have no expectation of a future of peace with him, God would not have taken the initiative to make peace with sinners > so we would have been eternally condemned, we would have no hope)
- What might God be like if he was not a god of peace? What if he was a god of war? Hate? fear? Disaster? Trouble? Confusion? Anxiety?
  - Doesn't God make a lot of war? Doesn't he cause disasters? If he does some of these things how is he still a god of peace? (all of the actions that God has taken that look not peaceful were done to make peace [which he only had to do because of sin] > man destroyed peace by sinning so now God must make peace in some of these ways [for example, if someone is making war against your country sometimes the only way to peace is to make war with them which God does against Satan and sin], he may punish the wicked which gives peace to the righteous, he may cause bad things to happen in our lives that we would grow in peace [Hebrews 12:11 "grow the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it"], killing his Son on the cross to make peace with us [Colossians 1:20], God wouldn't have to take these measures to make peace if sin had not entered the world and corrupted it and separated us from God, all that God does is leading towards new heaven and earth where there is perfect peace)

- How do we know that God is a God of peace? (first and foremost **because he took the initiative to make peace with his enemies by sending Jesus to the cross**, his word says so, he always keeps his promises which include everlasting peace to his children, because of his actions in history and towards us today to make and give peace as we will now discuss, when God created the world there was complete peace before sin)

## **2. God makes peace.**

Job 25:2 "Dominion and fear are with God; he makes peace in his high heaven."

Colossians 1:19-20 "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."

- Where is God aiming to make peace? (everywhere, heaven and earth [Colossians 1:20])

- What happened that there is not peace right now? (sin, our sin corrupted all of creation and now needs to be made right)

- God takes the initiative to make peace. What does this mean? (God had to be the one to do it, man could not make peace because of our sin, we were hopelessly lost without God acting, God could only take the initiative to make peace because he is a God of peace)

- According to these verses, what are some things God has done, is doing, or will do to make peace? Why does doing each thing make peace?

- Has done > Hebrews 13:20 "the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus" (resurrected Jesus, this makes peace because now those who believe in Jesus can have peace with God)

- Is doing > 1 Thessalonians 5:23 "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (sanctify us, this makes peace because it is through sanctification that we are prepared for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ where we will be found blameless aka at peace with God)

- What does sanctify mean? (it means to little by little make us more like Jesus, it is the lifelong process by which we are changed)

- Will do > Romans 16:20 "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." (he will crush Satan, this makes peace because Satan is the enemy of peace whose only aim is to steal and kill and destroy)

- With sin and Satan gone > Revelation 21:3-4 "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (he is preparing a place for us where he will dwell with us and bring perfect peace forever, with sin and Satan gone this is what it will be)

## **3. God gives peace.**

Psalms 83:1 "O God, do not keep silence; do not hold your peace or be still, O God!"

Romans 15:13 "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing"

Colossians 1:2 "Grace to you and peace from God our Father."

- True peace comes from God. In what ways does God give peace in...

...our relationship with him? (freedom from the wrath of God through Jesus Christ)

...our relationships with others? (teaches us how to act towards others in ways that promote peace, gives us the ability to actually live in peace with others, etc.)

...ourselves? (works in us through His Spirit to actually instill peace in us and grow us in peace, leads us through trials that make us grow in peace [Hebrews 12:11], teaches us about Himself through the Bible that promotes peace because he is peace, gives us peace through prayer, etc.)

...our circumstances? (teaches us how to act in circumstances in ways that produce peace, gives peace through the Word and prayer, miraculously intervenes in relationship [especially ones we have prayed for] to give peace, etc.)

- Are there any ways that you have experienced God-given peace in some area of your life that has helped you in times of hate/war/fear/disaster/trouble/confusion/anxiety?

- Can we make ourselves be at peace? (no, peace is given to us from God) Do we still have a responsibility to pursue being at peace with God, with others and within ourselves? (yes)

- We must work the field, but no growth happens if God doesn't bring the rain. We must pray for God to work.

- What are some ways we could pray for God to bring peace? (salvation of friends/family, the work of missionaries throughout the world to preach peace to unbelievers, peace when we feel anxious or confused, peace when we feel angry with someone, that God would help us when we have relationship problems, we could pray that Jesus would come back soon [rev. 22:20] and so bring final peace, praying that God would work against the schemes of the devil, etc.)

- Prayer Requests

**For Next Time: - Read Chapter 13 of Practice of Godliness, "Peace".**

***- Keep memorizing the verse you've chosen. Add another!***

### **Peace Memory Verses (pick at least 1)**

- Romans 12:18 "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all."

- Romans 5:1 "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

- Philippians 4:6-7 "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

- Colossians 3:15 "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body."

- Psalm 34:14 "Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it."

- Matthew 5:9 ""Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 7: What does the law of God require? Personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience; that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves. What God forbids should never be done and what God commands should always be done. (Matthew 22:37-40)
  - Question 8: What is the law of God stated in the ten commandments? You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below—you shall not bow down to them or worship them. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Honor your father and your mother. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony. You shall not covet.
- Review Memory Verse List – Discuss one of them

## **Review**

- What is peace? (Definition: Peace is freedom from God's wrath and freedom from turmoil within ourselves and with others.)
- How does God the Father demonstrate peace? (the world he created had perfect peace, he took the initiative in making peace by sending Jesus to take God's wrath in our place, he is going to make perfect peace in heaven forever, he works in our hearts through the Holy Spirit/Bible/Prayer so that we experience more peace in our lives)

## **Jesus – The Prince of Peace**

### **1. Jesus was a man of peace.**

- Isaiah 9:6-7 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end"
- Malachi 2:6 "True instruction was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity."
  - Who are these 2 verses talking about? (Jesus)
  - These 2 verses are prophecy which means they foretold about Jesus before He came. What do these verses say about Jesus? (he is the prince of peace [so we could say he champions peace or that peace characterizes him like it did God the Father], he will bring more and more peace forever as he rules over everything, Jesus walked in peace and uprightness, he had no wrong on his lips but only true instruction and turned many away from iniquity, SUMMARY=Jesus is a man of peace)

- Discuss what it means for Jesus to be a man of perfect peace, how he was never anxious, confused, hateful or afraid. Can you imagine never feeling these ways? What are some examples from our lives of when we feel these ways?

- Jesus never felt these ways. He was a man of perfect peace. Isaiah 26:3 "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you."

- According to this verse, why was Jesus in perfect peace? (because his mind was fixed on God and trusting in Him)

## **2. Jesus died so that we would have peace with God if we believe in him.**

- Isaiah 53:5 "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed."

- This is another prophecy. Who is this talking about? (Jesus)

- What does this say would happen to Jesus and why would this have to happen? (Jesus was pierced/crushed/chastised/wounded because of OUR transgressions/iniquities [sins] SO THAT WE would have peace and healing)

- When was Jesus pierced/crushed/chastised/wounded for our sin? (on the cross)

- Romans 5:1,9,10 "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...we [are] saved by him from the wrath of God...while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son"

- Peace is primarily freedom from God's wrath. Why do we deserve God's wrath upon us? (because of our sin which separates us from him, our sin makes us guilty so we deserve punishment, we were God's enemies [v. 10] > at war with God [opposite of peace])

- What is the punishment that we deserve? (eternal punishment away from God in the lake of fire [hell])

- Why will we not be punished if we have faith in Jesus? (because Jesus took God's wrath upon himself in our place on the cross)

- What do we have to believe about Jesus to be saved? (that he was the Son of God who lived the perfect life we couldn't live and suffered on our behalf the punishment we deserved because of our sin)

## **3. Jesus loves us so much that he wants us to have peace.**

- John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

- John 16:33 "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

- Jesus is talking in these verses. What does Jesus want for us? (peace, to have hearts not troubled, to not be afraid, to be able to withstand tribulation, to take heart, to trust in Him having overcome the world so that we have nothing to fear)

- Jesus gives us true peace. The world can only offer us temporary or fake peace. Jesus is actually able to give us peace because he has "overcome the world". How did Jesus overcome the world? (by living perfectly and conquering death by being raised from the dead)

- How much does Jesus rule over? (everything)

- What do we have to be afraid of if Jesus rules over the whole world? (nothing, if we are his children, those who don't believe in Jesus should be afraid of the wrath of God that will come upon them)

- Psalm 56:11 "in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

For Next Time: Do the Bible Study sheet on Isaiah 9:2-7.

- Prayer Requests – Think about things in your life that you are anxious or fearful of. Pray that God would help you to trust in Him and be at peace. Thank him for giving you peace because of Jesus' sacrifice.

### **Peace Memory Verses (pick at least 1)**

- Romans 12:18 "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all."

- Romans 5:1 "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

- Philippians 4:6-7 "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

- Colossians 3:15 "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body."

- Psalm 34:14 "Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it."

- Matthew 5:9 ""Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

- Hebrews 12:14 "Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord."



- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 9: What does God require in the first, second and third commandments? First, that we know and trust God as the only true and living God. Second, that we avoid all idolatry and do not worship God improperly. Third, that we treat God's name with fear and reverence, honoring also his Word and works. (Deuteronomy 6:13-14)
  - Question 10: What does God require in the fourth and fifth commandments? Fourth, that on the Sabbath day we spend time in public and private worship of God, rest from routine employment, serve the Lord and others, and so anticipate the eternal Sabbath. Fifth, that we love and honor our father and our mother, submitting to their godly discipline and direction. (Leviticus 19:3)
- Review Memory Verse List – Discuss one of them

### **Review**

- What is peace?
- How does God the Father demonstrate peace?
- How does Jesus demonstrate peace?

### **Peace with God**

#### **1. Every person deserves the wrath of God because of their sin.**

- Can anyone quote Romans 3:23? Who has sinned and fallen short of God?
- Read together Romans 3:10-18. Who is righteous? Who has known the way of peace?
- Can anyone quote Romans 6:23? What do we deserve because of our sin?
- Discuss some of the ways that you have sinned in your life. Talk about how those sins declared war against a holy and perfect God.
- Galatians 3:10 says "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." Since none of us could obey everything in the Law perfectly, we are all cursed.

#### **2. Jesus bore the wrath of God on the cross so that we wouldn't have to.**

- We need our sins to be forgiven, but how? Hebrews 9:22 says "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." We needed a perfect sacrifice to shed blood [die] for us.
- Discuss what these verses say about us and what Jesus did for us.
  - Isaiah 53:5-6 "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

- Romans 5:8-9 “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.”

- Colossians 2:13-14 “And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”

- Remember how Galatians 3:10 said we are cursed? Galatians 3:13 says “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”. How did our curse get removed?

### **3. We must believe that Jesus Christ alone forgives sins to be saved.**

- Open Bibles to John chapter 3.

- Read verse 16. Who will not perish but have eternal life?

- Read verse 18. Who is not condemned? Who is condemned?

- Read verse 36. Who has eternal life? Who has the wrath of God still upon them?

- 1 John 5:12 says “Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.” Who has life? Who does not have life?

- Romans 10:9 says “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” What must we do to be saved?

- How should this truth make us think about people of other religions?

- FYI, any of these verses under point 3 would be great ones to memorize.

- Romans 5:1 says “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Who has peace with God?

- We really hammered a lot of verses today but can you see how clear God wants to make it to us that we don’t have peace with him naturally, and that we need it? And that God did everything to make a way for us to have peace? God’s writing to us in the bible is overwhelmingly, lovingly clear.

- Peace with God matters more than anything else in the world. Do you have it for yourself? Because you don’t inherit peace with God from your parents. Do your friends and family have it? How can we pray for and witness to them?

For Next Time: Do the Bible Study sheet on Ephesians 2:13-19.

- Prayer Requests

### **Peace Memory Verses (pick at least 1)**

- Romans 12:18 “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”

- Romans 5:1 “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- Philippians 4:6-7 “do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
- Colossians 3:15 “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body.”
- Psalm 34:14 “Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.”
- Matthew 5:9 ““Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”
- Hebrews 12:14 “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”

### Study Guide

#### Review

- What is peace? (Definition: Peace is freedom from God’s wrath and freedom from turmoil within ourselves and with others.)
- How does God the Father demonstrate peace? (the world he created had perfect peace, he took the initiative in making peace by sending Jesus to take God’s wrath in our place, he is going to make perfect peace in heaven forever, he works in our hearts through the Holy Spirit/Bible/Prayer so that we experience more peace in our lives)
- How does Jesus demonstrate peace? (he was a man of perfect peace when he dwelled on earth, he died so that we could have peace with God, He wants us to have peace in our lives)

#### Peace with God

1. Who has sinned and fallen short of God? (everyone)
  - Who is righteous? (nobody, no not one) Who has known the way of peace? (no one)
  - What do we deserve because of our sin? (spiritual death > hell, eternal separation from God since he can’t tolerate having sin in his presence)
2. How did our curse get removed? (Jesus took the curse in our place through his death on the cross)
3. Who will not perish but have eternal life? (those who believe in Jesus)
  - Who is not condemned? (whoever believes in Jesus) Who is condemned? (whoever does not believe in Jesus)
  - Who has eternal life? (those who believe in Jesus) Who has the wrath of God still upon them? (those who do not obey/believe in Jesus)
  - Who has life? (whoever believes in Jesus) Who does not have life? (whoever does not believe in Jesus)
  - What must we do to be saved? (confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead)
  - How should this truth make us think about people of other religions? (they are condemned/have the wrath of God upon them/do not have life because they do not believe in Jesus, they need to believe in Jesus to be saved so we must share with them the gospel)
  - Who has peace with God? (those who have faith in Jesus)

- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 11: What does God require in the sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments? Sixth, that we do not hurt, or hate, or be hostile to our neighbor, but be patient and peaceful, pursuing even our enemies with love. Seventh, that we abstain from sexual immorality and live purely and faithfully, whether in marriage or in single life, avoiding all impure actions, looks, words, thoughts, or desires, and whatever might lead to them. Eighth, that we do not take without permission that which belongs to someone else, nor withhold any good from someone we might benefit. (Romans 13:9)
  - Question 12: What does God require in the ninth and tenth commandments? Ninth, that we do not lie or deceive, but speak the truth in love. Tenth, that we are content, not envying anyone or resenting what God has given them or us. (James 2:8)
- Review Memory Verse List

### **Review**

- What is peace?
- How does God the Father demonstrate peace?
- How does Jesus demonstrate peace?
- How do we get peace with God?

### **Peace within Ourselves**

#### **1. Peace within ourselves is not possible if we do not have peace with God.**

- Galatians 5:22 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness...”
  - We must have the Spirit to have inner peace. Who has the Spirit?
- Philippians 4:6-7 “do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
  - Who receives God’s peace?
- Ephesians 2:13-14 “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace”
  - We have no peace apart from Jesus. He is our peace.
- How do we explain how some people that don’t know God seem to have inner peace?
  - Isaiah 57:20 “the wicked are like the tossing sea”

## **2. Even if we have peace with God, there are “disturbers of the peace” in our lives.**

- Our peace is disturbed when we become anxious, worried, afraid, angry, envious, etc.
- Things that disturb our peace are often petty, ordinary problems. They rob us of peace because we usually try to deal with these problems on our own, without God. What are some examples of petty problems that disturb our inner peace?
- We not only worry about distressing circumstances in our lives but we also envy and resent other people who appear to get a better deal in life or who mistreat us in some way. Have you ever felt this way?
- Circumstances that rob us of inner peace are times when we are uncertain. What are things we are often uncertain about that rob us of inner peace?

## **3. Lack of inner peace in our lives is often a result of a lack of trusting God in that area**

- In each of these verses, why is there a lack of peace?
  - Mark 4:40 “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”
  - Mark 5:36 “Do not fear, only believe.”
  - Isaiah 35:4 “Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.”
  - Matthew 6:31-32 “Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.”
- In John 16:33, Jesus says “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”
  - What does God promise we will face?
  - Why can we take heart in hard times?
- In uncertain circumstances, we often choose between trusting God to work it out or worrying about what will happen. What does God promise us in each of these verses?
  - Romans 8:28 “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”
  - Matthew 10:29-31 “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”
  - Isaiah 41:10 “fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”
- In times of uncertainty or some other difficulty, we must trust the God will work all things for our good. When we say “for our good”, what do we mean? What do we not mean?

- Prayer Requests

## Study Guide

### Review

- What is peace? (Definition: Peace is freedom from God's wrath and freedom from turmoil within ourselves and with others.)
- How does God the Father demonstrate peace? (the world he created had perfect peace, he took the initiative in making peace by sending Jesus to take God's wrath in our place, he is going to make perfect peace in heaven forever, he works in our hearts through the Holy Spirit/Bible/Prayer so that we experience more peace in our lives)
- How does Jesus demonstrate peace? (he was a man of perfect peace when he dwelled on earth, he died so that we could have peace with God, He wants us to have peace in our lives)
- How do we get peace with God? (Belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior taking the punishment we deserved)

1. We must have the Spirit to have inner peace. Who has the Spirit? (those who are saved and are at peace with God)

- Who receives God's peace? (those who go to God in prayer "in Christ Jesus", we must be united to Jesus to have inner peace)
- How do we explain how some people that don't know God seem to have inner peace? (they act like they have it even though they don't, we can't see the heart, it will become evident as life continues to pile up on them)

3. - Mark 4:40 "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" (lack of faith/trust in God taking care of the situation > not talking about salvation here)

- Mark 5:36 "Do not fear, only believe." (lack of belief in God working > again not talking about salvation)

- Isaiah 35:4 "Say to those who have an anxious heart, 'Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.'" (lack of trusting that God will work in our situation)

- Matthew 6:31-32 "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all." (trusting that God will provide what we need)

- What does God promise we will face? (tribulations, troubles)

- Why can we take heart in hard times? (God has overcome the world and wants to give us peace)

- Romans 8:28 "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." (God will work it out for our good)

- Matthew 10:29-31 "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." (God values us deeply and will watch over us)

- Isaiah 41:10 "fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (God will give us the strength we need to go through whatever is in store for us)

- In times of uncertainty or some other difficulty, we must trust the God will work all things for our good. When we say "for our good", what do we mean? What do we not mean? (we mean making us more like Christ/using us for the glory of God/working in our character that which is pleasing in his sight, we do not mean giving us more money or health or material prosperity or necessarily what we think would be best)

- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 13: Can anyone keep the law of God perfectly? Since the fall, no mere human has been able to keep the law of God perfectly, but consistently breaks it in thought, word, and deed. (Romans 3:10-12)
  - Question 14: Did God create us unable to keep his law? No, but because of the disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, all of creation is fallen; we are all born in sin and guilt, corrupt in our nature and unable to keep God's law. (Romans 5:12)

### **Review**

- 1. Peace within ourselves is not possible if we do not have peace with God.**
- 2. Even if we have peace with God, there are "disturbers of the peace" in our lives.**
- 3. Lack of inner peace in our lives is often a result of a lack of trusting God in that area**

### **Peace within Ourselves - Pursuing Inner Peace**

#### **1. Pursue inner peace by prayer.**

- What would God have us do in each of these verses to gain inner peace?
  - Philippians 4:6-7 "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (pray, ask God for help [supplication], express thanksgiving to God)
  - Thanksgiving is important because it remembers all the times God has been faithful which helps us to trust Him to come through again.
  - 1 Peter 5:7 "casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you" (trust God with handling whatever makes us anxious)
- Coming to God in prayer promises peace. It does not promise deliverance.
  - What are some possible examples of God not giving what we ask for but still giving peace?
  - We often don't find peace because we won't settle for anything but deliverance from trouble. Sometimes God gives peace in the trouble. Can you think of any examples in the Bible where God gives peace but doesn't get rid of the trouble? (2 cor. 12:9-10 - Paul's thorn, Jeremiah imprisoned and going into exile, difficulties in our own lives, the disciples preaching against much opposition in Acts)
- God loves persistent prayer. We should not be content with a lack of inner peace but should continue to pray until God gives peace.

#### **2. Pursue inner peace by depending on the Holy Spirit.**

- Peace is a fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness..."
  - What does "fruit of the Spirit" mean? (that we can't grow it on our own, the Spirit grows it in us, we need him to work to grow in peace)
  - We must have the Spirit to have inner peace. Who has the Spirit? (those who are saved and are at peace with God)
- What does it mean to depend on the Holy Spirit? (it means to not think we can do it on our own, we display this dependance through prayer - asking Him to grow us in peace)

#### **3. Pursue inner peace by pursuing God's Word.**

- We must be firmly grounded in the truth in order to withstand difficult times. Where is this truth found? (the Bible)
  - There are many lies that we might come to believe about our troubles if we do not know what God's Word says.
  - For example, when we are in a troubling situation, Satan often slanders God to us and leads us to think "if God really loved me, he would not have allowed this to happen to me or would've given me a way to avoid this problem". This is what we call the "prosperity gospel". Why is this not true? (because God's love is displayed in what Jesus did for us AND

keeping us THROUGH difficult times - not by keeping us from trouble, Hebrews 12 and Proverbs 3 say that God disciplines those whom he loves, our troubles are God loving us so that we would become more like him/be a better witness to other sufferers/know him deeper. The prosperity gospel teaches otherwise and is a lie from Satan.)

- Proverbs 3:11-12 "do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights."
- The word devil means accuser or slanderer. He tries to make us believe lies like the one above. In order to resist the Devil (James 4:7) we must know the TRUTH in God's Word.
  - When Jesus was tempted, how did Jesus defend himself? (with the truth of God's word, quoting scripture)
  - What are some other lies we might be tempted believe in difficult circumstances?
- Why does inner peace matter?
  - Because God commands it - see point 1 above, Phil. 4:6-7, 1 Peter 5:7
  - Because it makes way for more joy
  - Because it is a witness to others that we can have peace in troubling circumstances

- Prayer Requests

### **Peace Memory Verses (pick at least 1)**

- Romans 12:18 "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all."
- Romans 5:1 "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
- Philippians 4:6-7 "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
- Colossians 3:15 "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body."
- Psalm 34:14 "Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it."
- Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."
- Hebrews 12:14 "Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord."

### **Study Guide**



- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 15: Since no one can keep the law, what is its purpose? That we may know the holy nature and will of God, and the sinful nature and disobedience of our hearts; and thus our need of a Savior. The law also teaches and exhorts us to live a life worthy of our Savior. (Romans 3:20)
  - Question 16: What is sin? Sin is rejecting or ignoring God in the world he created, rebelling against him by living without reference to him, not being or doing what he requires in his law—resulting in our death and the disintegration of all creation. (1 John 3:4)
- Review Memory Verse List

### **Review**

- What is peace? (Definition: Peace is freedom from God's wrath and freedom from turmoil within ourselves and with others.)
- How do we get peace with God? (Belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior taking the punishment we deserved)
- How do we pursue inner peace? (through prayer, dependence on the Holy Spirit and pursuit of God's Word)

### **Peace with Others**

- We must have peace with God in order to have true peace with others. Why? (true peace only comes from the source of peace - God, his peace enables our pursuit of peace, peace is a fruit of the spirit and so only comes to those who have his spirit, caring about peace with others is a God-given care)

#### **1. Peace with others is extremely important to God.**

- God tells us to pursue and strive after peace with others. Romans 12:18 "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." What should we do to pursue peace in these verses?
  - Romans 14:19 "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace" (make every effort)
  - Hebrews 12:14 "strive for peace with everyone" (strive)
  - Matthew 5:23-24 "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." (make peace before doing anything else [including worship], make peace even if the other guy has the problem [your brother has something against you])
- Why is peace with others important in each of these verses?
  - Matthew 5:9 "'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.'" (God's children are characterized by their desire to be at peace with others)
  - Colossians 3:15 "as members of one body you were called to peace." (we are part one body and so are meant by God to be at peace with one another)
    - What would it be like if we had different body parts in our physical body that were not at peace with each other?
- Why does God care about our peace with others? (It is a witness to the world as one body, it is obedience to God, it shows that we trust in him to be just rather than taking vengeance ourselves, it is what should overflow from a heart that has peace with God and knows his love, etc.)

#### **2. How to pursue peace with other believers**

1. Remember that we are fellow members of the same body.
  - Romans 12:5 "we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another" > We belong to each other
2. Remember that we are members of Christ's body.
  - Ephesians 5:29-30 "For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body." It is Jesus' glory at stake in our relationships with one another.
3. We must be humble and face up to our contributions to conflict.

- The cause of problems in relationships often lies wholly or at least partly with us. What are some ways we partially contribute to problems in relationships?

4. We must take the initiative to pursue peace.

- It doesn't matter who is in the wrong. Unresolved conflict between believers is sin and must be treated as such.
- John 13:35 says "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." - Why do relationships between Christians matter so much? (because it is how people know we are followers of Christ, it shows the power of Christ to unite all different kinds of people to one family)
- Taking the initiative to pursue peace also includes praying for God to work in these relationships.

**3. How to pursue peace with unbelievers**

- Open your Bibles and read Romans 12:17-21.
  - How does this passage say we should interact with unbelievers?
- Again, it is our responsibility to take steps to restore peace.
  - What are some things we can do to try to restore peace? (pray, have conversations, admit and be sorry for our responsibility in the conflict, give some trust to them)
- We are in no way to seek revenge. Why not? (because we are not the judge, because it seeks to gratify our own desires, it is pride in taking it into our own hands instead of leaving it to God, it doesn't trust God to handle it or that He will provide justice, we want mercy for ourselves but not for others)
- Why is it important to pursue peace with unbelievers? (so we have a relationship through which we can witness to them, we are commanded to, it represents Christ, etc.)
- According to the following verses, what do we do when believers/unbelievers won't be at peace with us, or are even hostile, even though we have tried? Do we keep trying?
  - Matthew 18:21-22 "Then Peter came up and said to him, 'Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?'" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times." (keep forgiving, over and over)
  - 2 Timothy 2:3-4 "Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him." (Keep your eye on what God has enlisted you to, living for him, being at peace with God, yourself, and others. Don't get so entangled with situations that can keep you from peace. As much as it depends on you but then we pray and give it to God.)
  - Romans 12:18 "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." (do whatever you can for peace, this includes forgiveness)

- DO BIBLE STUDY WORKSHEET FOR NEXT SUNDAY ON ROMANS 14:12-21.

- Prayer Requests

**Study Guide**

**Review**

- What is peace? (Definition: Peace is freedom from God's wrath and freedom from turmoil within ourselves and with others.)
- How do we get peace with God? (Belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior taking the punishment we deserved)
- How do we pursue inner peace? (through prayer, dependence on the Holy Spirit and pursuit of God's Word)

- Fighter verse

- Prayer

- New City Catechism

- Question 17: What is idolatry? Idolatry is trusting in created things rather than the Creator for our hope and happiness, significance and security. (Romans 1:21,25)

- Question 18: Will God allow our disobedience and idolatry to go unpunished? No, every sin is against the sovereignty, holiness, and goodness of God, and against his righteous law, and God is righteously angry with our sins and will punish them in his just judgment both in this life, and in the life to come. (Ephesians 5:5-6)

### **Patience**

- Discuss what you think of when you think of patience.

### **Biblical Principles of Patience**

1. God's patience delays punishment so that we might be saved.

- Romans 2:4 "Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?"

- 2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

- Why is it important that God is patient in delaying punishment? (so that we all people have a chance to be saved, otherwise we would be immediately punished for our sin)

- God's patience allows us to be spared from punishment for the moment so that we might put our faith in Jesus and be saved. It is extremely kind and loving that God is patient, he wouldn't have to be. He has every right to punish right away!

2. Christians have patience.

- Ecclesiastes 7:8 "the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit."

- Galatians 5:22 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness"

- Ephesians 4:1-2 "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,"

- Colossians 1:10-11 "so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy;"

- How might patience reflect that we are a Christian? (it shows that earthly concerns are not primary, it is a fruit of the spirit, patience is ultimately not self-serving (proud) but others exalting (humble) in that it bears with one another in love/waits for God to act/gives us the ability to endure difficult times, etc.)

3. Patience is demonstrated by how we wait.

- Psalm 37:7 "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him"
- Psalm 40:1 "I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry"
- Romans 8:25 "But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."
- Hebrews 6:15 "And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise."
- Patience is something we get better at the more we practice. It also demonstrates trust.
- What does it mean to wait patiently? What might it look like to not wait patiently? Any examples?

#### 4. Patience is demonstrated by how we interact with others.

- Acts 26:3 "Listen to me patiently"
- 1 Corinthians 13:4 "Love is patient"
- 1 Thessalonians 5:14 "And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all."
- 1 Timothy 4:2 "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching."
- What are some ways we could be patient or impatient with other believers? With unbelievers? Any examples?

#### 5. Patience is demonstrated by how we endure suffering.

- Romans 12:12 "be patient in tribulation"
- 2 Corinthians 1:6 "you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer."
- Revelation 1:9 "I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus"
- Revelation 2:2-3 [Jesus speaking] "I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary"
- What does our patient endurance of suffering say about God? (it says that he is faithful to work it out for good, he is trustworthy even when things might be scary, he is standing on the water reaching out his hand to us even when the waves are crashing around us, it ultimately shows that our hope is in God and nothing else, etc.)

- **Definition: Patience joyfully accepts delay, suffering, and the shortcomings of others.**

- Prayer Requests

**For Next Time: - Read Chapter 14 of Practice of Godliness, "Patience".**

***- Keep memorizing the verse you've chosen.***

**Patience Memory Verses (pick at least 1)**

- Psalm 40:1 "I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry"
- Proverbs 25:5 "With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone."
- 1 Timothy 2:24 "And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil"
- 1 Thessalonians 5:14 "And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all."
- 2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

**Study Guide**

1. - Why is it important that God is patient in delaying punishment? (so that we all people have a chance to be saved, otherwise we would be immediately punished for our sin)
2. - How might patience reflect that we are a Christian? (it shows that earthly concerns are not primary, it is a fruit of the spirit, patience is ultimately not self-serving (proud) but others exalting (humble) in that it bears with one another in love/waits for God to act/gives us the ability to endure difficult times, etc.)
5. - What does our patient endurance of suffering say about God? (it says that he is faithful to work it out for good, he is trustworthy even when things might be scary, he is standing on the water reaching out his hand to us even when the waves are crashing around us, it ultimately shows that our hope is in God and nothing else, etc.)

- Fighter verse
- Pray in light of fighter verse
- New City Catechism
  - Question 19: Is there any way to escape punishment and be brought back into God's favor? Yes, to satisfy his justice, God himself, out of mere mercy, reconciles us to himself and delivers us from sin and from the punishment for sin, by a Redeemer. (Isaiah 53:10-11)
  - Question 20: Who is the Redeemer? The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, in whom God became man and bore the penalty for sin himself. (1 Tim. 2:5)
- Review patience memory verses.

## **Review**

- What is Patience? (Patience joyfully accepts delay, suffering, and the shortcomings of others.)

## **God and Patience**

### **1. God patiently forgives.**

- Read Matthew 18:23-27. What does this part of the parable say about God's patience towards us? (that he is willing to forgive our sin rather than exact punishment, the man in the parable says he will pay everything and God recognizes that he could never pay the debt and so patiently forgives – just like he does with us and our debt of sin)
- Romans 2:4 "Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?"
  - What does this verse say that God's patience is meant to bring about? (repentance)
    - What is repentance? (a heart-deep grieving of sin and turning away from it and towards God)
  - When we repent, what does God give us? 1 John 1:9 (forgiveness, cleanness)
    - This is possible only because God is patient.
- Proverbs 24:16 "for the righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity".
  - What characterizes the righteous person? (when he falls/sins he gets back up again, he repents of his sin and turns to God again, they keep fighting but from the heart and not just a going through the motions)
  - What does this say about God that even though we fall he still calls us righteous if we turn to him in true repentance? (he patiently bears with our failures)

- 1 Timothy 1:15-16 "The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life."

- How does saving the apostle Paul show God's perfect patience? (it shows that He is willing to save sinners – even "the worst", Paul persecuted the church but God saved him to testify that no sin is too great that Jesus blood couldn't make the payment, God patiently waits until sinners come to Him and then has mercy on them in forgiving their sin)

- Read Jeremiah 31:31-34. What does God do to demonstrate his patience with those who have broken his covenant? (he makes a new covenant where he puts the law within us, he makes us know Him, he forgives our sin)

## **2. God's patience demonstrates who he is.**

- Romans 9:22 "What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction"

- In this verse, what does God's patience display about Him? (his wrath and his power)

- For example, Romans 9:17 says "For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."

- What purposes does God's patience with Pharaoh serve? (to show God's power, that his name might be proclaimed in all the earth)

- Read Exodus 32:7-14. What does God show about himself in being patient with Israel rather than destroying them? (his faithfulness to his promises, his forbearance with sin)

- This is what God intended to show by His actions > Exodus 34:6-7 "The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

- Look back at 1 Timothy 1:15-16.

- What other aspects of God are shown through His patience in saving the "foremost" of sinners? (his mercy, his forbearance, his sovereignty over all things, his faithfulness to those who believe in him)

## **Assignment for next time: fill out Bible study worksheet on 2 Peter 3:8-15a.**

- Prayer Requests - What are ways that God has been patient with you?

**For Next Time: - Read Chapter 14 of Practice of Godliness, "Patience".**

## Leader's Guide - Youth Sunday School – Us and Patience: Patiently Waiting – 12/20/20

- Fighter verse
- Pray in light of fighter verse
- New City Catechism
  - Question 21: What sort of Redeemer is needed to bring us back to God? One who is truly human and also truly God. (Isaiah 9:6)
  - Question 22: Why must the Redeemer be truly human? That in human nature he might on our behalf perfectly obey the whole law and suffer the punishment for human sin; and also that he might sympathize with our weaknesses. (Heb. 2:17)
- Review patience memory verses

### **Review**

- What is Patience? (Patience joyfully accepts delay, suffering, and the shortcomings of others.)
- God patiently forgives, and His patience demonstrates who He is.

### **Patiently Waiting**

- What are some things we have to wait for that we wish we didn't?
  - Think about examples in these different categories:
    - a. day-to-day life
    - b. short-term future
    - c. long-term future
    - d. things that God has to do
- What are some biblical examples of people waiting? (Noah waiting for water to recede, Abraham having children, Isaac and Rebekah having children, Jacob marrying Rachel, Joseph in prison in Egypt, the people of Israel in Egypt/the wilderness, Hannah having children [Samuel], David becoming king, Israel waiting for the Messiah to come, Disciples waiting in Jerusalem for Holy Spirit to come, us waiting for Jesus' return)
- ***Patiently waiting is learning to trust the outworking of God's timetable in our lives.***
  - Often, we are tempted to speed up his timetable or substitute another solution. What are some examples of how we might do this?
  - Can you think of any biblical examples of people trying to speed up God's timetable or substitute another solution?
    - Could read 1 Samuel 13:8-14 (Saul), Genesis 16:1-2 (Abraham)
    - These people grew impatient because of unbelief in the faithfulness of God and unwillingness to wait on him.
- In the following verses, what does waiting patiently for the Lord lead to?



- Psalm 40:1-2 says "I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure." (God's inclination, his hearing of our cry, drawing us up out of destruction, setting our feet upon a rock making our steps secure)
- Lamentations 3:25-26 "The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord." (God's goodness, God's saving power)

- We can easily get discouraged and give up when God's timetable for something stretches into years. What should we do in these times?

#### 1. Pray.

- Luke 18:1-8 - Parable of the Persistent Widow
- James 4:2-3 "You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions."

#### 2. Believe His promises.

- What are some promises God has made to us? i.e. Rom. 8:28, Heb. 12:5-6, Deut. 31:8, 2 Peter 3:13, 1 John 2:25
- There are some good things we desire that God has not promised us. What could some examples of these things be?
- How do we patiently wait for something that is not promised us in the Bible?
  - Trust who God is – that He is a loving Father who loves to give good gifts to His children, Matt. 7:11 "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"
  - He knows what gifts would not be good though we might disagree now
  - Allow God to shape your desires – Psalm 37:4 "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you [or you could say, change/give new] the desires of your heart."

#### 3. Obey His will.

- Things not going according to plan is not a reason to neglect God's commands (which, for the record, happens all the time). What is God's will for you in any circumstance and what kinds of things should we be doing no matter what? (our sanctification, we should be seeking the Lord in prayer/the Word/Christian fellowship/worship/service/etc.)
  - 1 Thessalonians 4:3 "For this is the will of God, your sanctification"
- Luke 17:10 "So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"
  - We are not owed anything for obedience, as if we could say "if I only do this or that God will give me what I want". We obey because of what he has given us already and this obedience should not be based on our perceived circumstances.

#### 4. Leave the results to Him.

- God "works all things according to the counsel of his will" (Ephesians 1:11) and will handle the results of our situation for His glory and our ultimate good far better than we could have arranged.

- We can trust the results to Him because He is a loving Father towards us. 1 Peter 5:7 - "casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you".

- Philippians 1:6 "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

- Prayer Requests - What are some ways we can grow in patiently waiting?

**For Next Time: - Read Chapter 14 of Practice of Godliness, "Patience".**

***- Keep memorizing the verse you've chosen.***

**Patience Memory Verses (pick at least 1)**

- Psalm 40:1 "I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry"

- Proverbs 25:5 "With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone."

- 1 Timothy 2:24 "And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil"

- 1 Thessalonians 5:14 "And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all."

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

- Fighter verse
- Pray in light of fighter verse
- New City Catechism
  - Question 23: Why must the Redeemer be truly God? That because of his divine nature his obedience and suffering would be perfect and effective; and also that he would be able to bear the righteous anger of God against sin and yet overcome death. (Acts 2:24)
  - Question 24: Why was it necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to die? Since death is the punishment for sin, Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God. By his substitutionary atoning death, he alone redeems us from hell and gains for us forgiveness of sin, righteousness, and everlasting life. (Colossians 1:21-22)
- Review patience memory verses

### **Review**

- What is Patience? (Patience joyfully accepts delay, suffering, and the shortcomings of others.)

### **Patiently Enduring**

#### **1. Suffering Mistreatment**

- One aspect of patience is enduring the abuse of others. Another word for patience is long-suffering. Long-suffering is to suffer a long time without growing bitter or resentful.

- What are some examples of suffering in this way?
- Why is it so hard to suffer the mistreatment of others without growing bitter or resentful?
- Some ways we could grow in long-suffering...
  - A. Consider Jesus' example. Read 1 Peter 2:19-25. What example did Jesus set? (discuss gospel here)
  - B. Remember the Lord's justice. Romans 12:19 "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." Why does God's justice allow us to suffer long? (we don't have to worry about giving justice ourselves)
  - C. Trust God's faithfulness. Genesis 50:20 "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." How could God be using for good in your life what others mean for evil?
  - D. Any other ways? (prayer, the word, Christian fellowship, God given practice ☺ etc.)

#### **2. Persevering through Adversity**

- Long-suffering is our patient response to people. Perseverance and endurance are our patient responses to circumstances. What are some adverse circumstances we could face?

- Endurance is the ability to stand up under adversity (it doesn't keep us down, we can still stand). Perseverance is the ability to progress in spite of it (it doesn't keep us back, we can still advance). We must have endurance in order to persevere – endurance is like step 1 and perseverance is step 2. What might endurance vs. perseverance look like in some of the examples of adverse circumstances we listed?

- Some ways we could grow in endurance and perseverance...

A. Believe God is sovereign. What does it mean that God is sovereign? (that he oversees and is in control over all things and nothing happens outside of his acceptance of it)

- 1 Peter 4:19 "Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good." Who is in control of our suffering? How should that make us feel and why?

B. Believe God works for our good. According to these verses, what good things does suffering produce? Or if God is working for our good why does he let us suffer?

- Romans 8:28-29 "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (for our good, to become like Jesus)

- James 1:2-4 "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (steadfastness, completeness)

- Romans 5:3-4 "we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope" (endurance, character, hope)

- It is interesting in the last 2 verses that trials produce the very thing we need to get through trials.

- Hebrews 12:11 "For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." (peaceful fruit of righteousness)

C. Be in God's Word. Romans 15:4 "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." We often do not know the reason for trials but the Scriptures give hope and hope leads to perseverance. What kinds of things do we hope for that would encourage us to persevere?

"He has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'" – Hebrews 13:5

- Prayer Requests

**For Next Time: - Read Chapter 14 of Practice of Godliness, "Patience".**

**- Keep memorizing the verse you've chosen.**

- Fighter verse
- Pray in light of fighter verse
- New City Catechism
  - Question 25: Does Christ's death mean all our sins can be forgiven? Yes, because Christ's death on the cross fully paid the penalty for our sin, God graciously imputes Christ's righteousness to us as if it were our own and will remember our sins no more. (2 Corinthians 5:21)
  - Question 26: What else does Christ's death redeem? Christ's death is the beginning of the redemption and renewal of every part of fallen creation, as he powerfully directs all things for his own glory and creation's good. (Colossians 1:19-20)
- Review patience memory verses

## **Review**

- What is Patience? (Patience joyfully accepts delay, suffering, and the shortcomings of others.)

## **Patience with Others**

### **1. Responding to Provocation (Intentional)**

- Provocation is the actions of others that tend to arouse anger. What are some examples of things others do that tend to arouse anger?
- To be patient when provoked requires us to be slow to anger. Being slow to anger is a huge theme of the book of Proverbs. What does each of the following verses say about being slow to anger?
  - Proverbs 14:29 "Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly."
  - Proverbs 15:18 "A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention."
  - Proverbs 16:32 "Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city."
  - Proverbs 29:22 "A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression"
- To develop slowness of anger we must reflect on God's slowness to anger. (Exodus 34:6 "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.") How does God demonstrate being slow to anger?
- Responding to provocation > We don't want to simply ignore but to respond in a godly manner that works to heal relationships rather than aggravate them. We want to seek the ultimate good of the other person rather than our own immediate satisfaction of our emotions.
- What are some ways we might respond to our earlier examples of provoking situations? What are some practical things we can do when provoked? Consider these verses as well.
  - Proverbs 15:1 "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."
  - Proverbs 19:11 "Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense."

## 2. Tolerating Shortcomings (Unintentional)

- This is probably a more common thing than the previous one. We are often irritated or disappointed by others (especially those close to us: friends, neighbors, family) who are not trying to irritate us. Often it is an unconscious action of someone else that is magnified either because of our close association or our own unmet expectations.
- What are some examples of situations where we may be irritated or disappointed by others who do not intend to irritate?
- Irritation with others often comes from pride, where we think we know best and are smarter or more capable. What do the following verses say about our feelings of superiority?
  - 1 Corinthians 4:7 "What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" (we have no reason to boast in any area that we excel and therefore no reason to be angry with others for not meeting a certain level)
  - 1 Corinthians 8:2 "If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know." (none of us knows as we ought, even if we excel in some area it is lacking and incomplete and therefore we can never treat others as if we know it all, everyone has a new perspective to offer)
- The best word for a patient reaction to the faults and failings of others is **forbearance**. Forbearance is the gracious tolerance for others' shortcomings. In each of these passages, patience is described as bearing with one another [forbearance]. What does bearing with one another involve in these verses?
  - Colossians 3:12-13 "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." (forgiving when you have a complaint against someone)
  - Ephesians 4:2-3 "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (maintaining the unity and peace, must be done in the power of the Spirit)
  - Specifically in the church, the unity of the body is far more important than petty irritations.
- Patience with others is ultimately loving them. 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 - "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful". We can be and should be patient with others because of God's patience with us. Remember all that you have been forgiven when we look at forgiving others.
- Prayer Requests – any in light of 1 Corinthians 13?

**For Next Time: - Do Bible study worksheet on James 5:7-11.**

## Youth Sunday School – What is Gentleness? – 1/24/21

- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 27: Are all people, just as they were lost through Adam, saved through Christ? No, only those who are elected by God and united to Christ by faith. Nevertheless, God in his mercy demonstrates common grace even to those who are not elect, by restraining the effects of sin and enabling works of culture for human well-being. (Romans 5:17)
  - Question 28: What happens after death to those not united to Christ by faith? At the day of judgment, they will receive the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them. They will be cast out from the favorable presence of God, into hell, to be justly and grievously punished, forever. (John 3:16-18, 36)
- Review Memory Verse List

### Gentleness

- Discuss what you think of when you think of Gentleness.
  - Men and women tend (not always) to struggle with gentleness in different ways. What do you think it typically looks like for a man to be gentle? Not gentle? What do you think it typically looks like for a woman to be gentle? Not gentle?
  - Many verses about gentleness use word pictures.
    - Discuss what these pictures are trying to illustrate about gentleness.
    - What is gentleness in these verses?
1. Deut. 32:2 “May my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, like gentle rain upon the tender grass, and like showers upon the herb.” (related to the way we speak and teach, gentleness seems to have regard for the frailty of who is on the receiving end like tender grass or an herb, is comes down softly like the rain or dew)
  2. Proverbs 15:4 “A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.” (gentleness again characterizes how we speak, gentleness gives life so is nurturing, gentleness is the opposite of perverse, gentleness does not break the spirit but nurtures it and is tender towards it)
  3. Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (it is a fruit of the spirit, again what does fruit of the spirit mean?)
  4. Galatians 6:1 “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness” (gentleness is a way we interact with someone who has sinned > no one is won over by a harsh response)

5. Ephesians 4:1-3 "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (it characterizes how we interact with each other again)

6. 1 Thessalonians 2:7 "But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children." (gentleness is nurturing, loving, deep care for others)

7. 1 Timothy 6:11 "Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness." (we should pursue gentleness, it doesn't come naturally to us > it takes work)

8. 2 Timothy 2:24-25 "And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness." (it is a way we can correct those or interact with those who disagree with us, the lord's servant acts in gentleness)

9. Titus 3:1-2 "Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people." (it characterizes our speech and our interactions with other people)

10. James 3:17 "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere." (wisdom can be gentle which means kind to others thoughts and opinions)

11. 1 Peter 3:15 "but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect" (gentleness is a way we can respond to unbelievers, it is thoughtful of them)

#### Common themes of Gentleness

- Gentleness is a way we can treat others; particularly regarding how we speak to others.
- Gentleness is a way we can interact with others who disagree with us.
- Gentleness is nurturing; it cares deeply for others.

**- Definition: Gentleness is to treat others with a genuinely sensitive regard for their thoughts, feelings, and rights.**

- How do gentleness and patience relate to each other? (gentleness grows out of patience with others)



## Youth Sunday School – The Gentleness of Christ – 1/31/21

- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 29: How can we be saved? Only by faith in Jesus Christ and in his substitutionary atoning death on the cross; so even though we are guilty of having disobeyed God and are still inclined to all evil, nevertheless, God, without any merit of our own but only by pure grace, imputes to us the perfect righteousness of Christ when we repent and believe in him. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
  - Question 30: What is faith in Jesus Christ? Faith in Jesus Christ is acknowledging the truth of everything that God has revealed in his Word, trusting in him, and also receiving and resting on him alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel. (Galatians 2:20)
- Review Memory Verse List

**Review** - Gentleness is to treat others with a genuinely sensitive regard for their thoughts, feelings, and rights.

- Any questions?

### **Gentleness of Christ**

Each of these passages has Jesus' gentleness in view. Discuss in each of these passages:

- How does Jesus demonstrate gentleness?
- Who is Jesus being gentle towards?
- How are we like those people?
- What can we expect Jesus to be like towards us?
- How do you think people treated in this way would then have responded to Jesus' message?

1. Matthew 12:17-21 "And many followed him, and he healed them all and ordered them not to make him known. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah [Isaiah 42:1-3]: "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench,

until he brings justice to victory; and in his name the Gentiles will hope."

2. Matthew 19:13-15 "Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." And he laid his hands on them and went away."

3. John 20:24-28 "Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

4. Matthew 9:10-13 "And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

5. Open Bible to read John 4:1-26, 39-42.

- What astonishes you about Jesus' gentleness?
- Why is Christ's gentleness so important?
- How can Christ's gentleness impact our lives?
  
- Prayer Requests

**For Next Time: - Do Bible Study of Matthew 11:28-30.**

***- Read Chapter 15 of Practice of Godliness, "Gentleness".***

***- Keep memorizing the gentleness memory verses.***

**Gentleness Memory Verses**

- Proverbs 15:4 "A gentle tongue is a tree of life"
- Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
- Girls: 1 Peter 3:3-4 "[Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear]— but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious."
- Guys: 2 Timothy 2:24-25 "And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness."
- Bonus: 1 Peter 3:15 "but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect"

## Youth Sunday School – Treating Others Gently – 2/14/21

- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 31: What do we believe by true faith? Everything taught to us in the gospel. The Apostles' Creed expresses what we believe in these words: We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting." (Jude 3)
- Review Memory Verse List

**Review** - Gentleness is to treat others with a genuinely sensitive regard for their thoughts, feelings, and rights.

### **Treating others gently**

**1.** *Actively seek to make others feel at ease or "restful" in our presence.*

a. Do not act so strongly opinionated/dogmatic that others are afraid to express opinions.

- James 3:17 "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere."
- What might gentleness in expressing our opinions look like or not look like?

b. Be sensitive to others' ideas and opinions.

- See James 3:17 above.
- Tolerance for others is being gentle with others in the presence of disagreement.
  - Our culture defines tolerance as "you must agree with me".
- What might gentleness in responding to others' opinions/ideas look like or not look like?

c. Avoid displaying your commitment to Christ in a way to make others feel guilty.

- Ephesians 4:1-3 "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
- What might gentleness in displaying our commitment to Christ look like or not look like?
  - What did the pharisees do?

## **2. Demonstrate respect for the personal dignity of the other person.**

### **a. Seek to change a wrong opinion/attitude by persuasion and kindness – not coercion.**

- 2 Tim. 2:24-25 “And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth”
- How can we love people while trying to change a wrong opinion/attitude?
- Optional role playing. One person believing something untrue about God and another trying to gently persuade. (i.e. Everyone is God's child, Jesus is not God, A loving God wouldn't let people suffer)

### **b. Avoid blunt speech and abrupt manner. Answer with respect, sensitivity to the reactions of others, and considerateness of how others may feel.**

- Gentleness does not feel like we can say what we want and whatever happens happens.
- The way we say things matters. Proverbs 27:14 “Whoever blesses his neighbor with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, will be counted as cursing.”
- What are examples of blunt/abrupt speech versus gentle speech?

### **c. Not threatened by opposition or resent opposition, seeks to gently instruct while trusting God to dissolve opposition.**

- 1 Peter 3:15 “but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect”
- What would it look like to make a defense gently/not gently to those who do not know God?

## **3. Do not degrade or belittle or gossip about someone who falls into sin. Instead grieve, pray, and restore gently.**

- Galatians 6:1 “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness”

- How should we deal gently with those caught in sin? Why is it tempting to degrade someone in this situation?

- Overall, we want to treat people like this > 1 Thess. 2:7 “we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.”

- Do we treat people like this? What are some areas you have opportunity to grow in?

- We want to love people in this way because God first loved us and continues to love us in this way.

- Prayer requests

## Leader's Guide - Youth Sunday School – Treating Others Considerately – 2/21/21

- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 32: What do justification and sanctification mean? Justification means our declared righteousness before God, made possible by Christ's death and resurrection for us. Sanctification means our gradual, growing righteousness, made possible by the Spirit's work in us. (1 Peter 1:1-2)
  - Question 33: Should those who have faith in Christ seek their salvation through their own works, or anywhere else? No, they should not, as everything necessary to salvation is found in Christ. To seek salvation through good works is a denial that Christ is the only Redeemer and Savior. (Galatians 2:16)
- Review Memory Verse List

**Review** - Gentleness is to treat others with a genuinely sensitive regard for their thoughts, feelings, and rights.

### **Treating others considerately**

- Considerateness is to not insist on the letter of the law (strict justice) but to use reason. To be inconsiderate is to use rules or the law as a weapon against people rather than loving them in spite of whatever shortcoming there may be.
  - James 3:17 "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, **open to reason**, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere."
- Considerateness is one important aspect of gentleness. What do you think of when you think of treating someone with considerateness?
- Considerate Christians listen to reason, are fair-minded and humane.
  - They ask "what is the right thing to do in this situation?"
  - This is not a "what feels right" question which focuses on self. Considerateness focuses on others and asks "what is best for them?"
  - To be clear, these kinds of Christians, though considerate, still do not stray from the truth of the Bible.
- The pharisees were the opposite of considerateness in their absolute rigid adherence to man-made tradition, always asking "is it lawful" (according to the law AND their traditions) rather than "is it kind/reasonable".
- Read the following examples of the Pharisees, and discuss what considerateness does or does not look like and why "strict justice" was wrong in these cases.

#### Matthew 12:1-8

- The Law was intended to guide us in loving God and loving people. The Law/the Sabbath was never intended to forbid someone from participating in the basic or urgent necessities of life like food (as Jesus illustrated with King David). The Pharisees used the law as a weapon to wield rather than being merciful to someone who was hungry.

#### Matthew 12:9-14

- The Law/the Sabbath was never intended to prevent someone from loving their neighbor (that is what it actually is intended to aid!). The Pharisees held strictly to the law at the expense of loving people.

#### Matthew 19:3-9

- The Pharisees used the writings of Moses to justify leaving their wives whenever they wanted to (which is the exact opposite of what Moses and God desired, as Jesus explains).

#### Matthew 23:1-5, 23-28

- The Jewish leaders used the law to burden people and draw attention to themselves when the law was meant to draw our attention to God and show us our inability to meet God's demands.

#### Mark 7:1-13

- The Pharisees were so fixated on the law that they were adamant on washing their hands while their hearts were filthy (similar to Matthew 23).

- The Pharisees clung to their own traditions and used them to justify breaking God's commandment > here they are neglecting honoring their father and mother in order to perform a ritual they made up.

#### Luke 7:36-39

- The Pharisees used the law as a weapon to condemn people rather than love them where they are.

- What are some scenarios where it might be considerate for someone to not insist on the letter of the law but to be open to reason? (someone has a traumatic event in their life that prevents them from completing a homework assignment on time, ambulances not getting pulled over for driving over the speed limit, someone not showing up to church on a Sunday for some reason, shortened jail sentences for good behavior, being gentle with someone who is caught in sin rather than openly condemning, not blasting a non-Christian for a sinful behavior that they have no reason to avoid doing, etc.)

Questions to ask ourselves:

- How do others see us? Rigid/unyielding/inflexible or reasonable/humane?

- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 34: Since we are redeemed by grace alone, through Christ alone, must we still do good works and obey God's Word? Yes, because Christ, having redeemed us by his blood, also renews us by his Spirit; so that our lives may show love and gratitude to God; so that we may be assured of our faith by the fruits; and so that by our godly behavior others may be won to Christ. (1 Peter 2:9-12)
  - Question 35: Since we are redeemed by grace alone, through faith alone, where does this faith come from? All the gifts we receive from Christ we receive through the Holy Spirit, including faith itself. (Titus 3:4-6)
- Review Memory Verse List

**Review and Prayer** - Gentleness is to treat others with a genuinely sensitive regard for their thoughts, feelings, and rights.

- What are some things you've learned about gentleness in these discussions?
  - Make sure to talk about God's gentleness with us, what it looks like, and why it matters.
- What are some specific areas you think God wants to work in your life regarding gentleness?
- Spend time in prayer for God to help us grow in these ways.

### **Seeking a Gentle Spirit**

- Gentleness can be hard to desire because we want to appear tough and able (more true with males, we tend to think the opposite of toughness is weakness/passivity), and this is what our culture would value but we want to be tough and tender: tough with ourselves but tender with others.
  - What does it mean to be tough with ourselves and what might that look like? (taking our sin seriously, really holding our lives up to the Bible to see where God would have us grow, acknowledging and confessing our sin to God and others quickly and clearly, etc.)
  - An example of this balance between tough and tender is the Proverbs 31 woman. Proverbs 31:25-26 "Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue."
    - How is this woman tough yet tender? (tough=strength/laughing at the future which demonstrates toughness on her own anxiety and fear/dignity which illustrates her fighting sin in general > these character traits are something she puts on – it isn't from herself but from outside herself [AKA God], tender=teaches with wisdom and kindness)

## **How we can develop a Gentle Spirit**

### **1. Decide –**

- 1 Timothy 6:11 “But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.”

- We must decide that this a character trait we want to develop.

- We must decide that we want to be mild and sensitive in dealing with others.

- We must decide that we really want to care for people.

- How can we help hold each other accountable to these decisions? (share with someone what our personal goals are in this area and follow up with them)

### **2. Ask –**

- Ask those who know us best and will be honest, “how do I come across to other people?”

- Am I dogmatic/opinionated/blunt/abrupt?

- Do I intimidate/dominate by sheer force of personality?

- Do people feel ill at ease in our presence because they think we are judging their weaknesses and correcting their faults?

- Think of someone you can ask this to who will be honest and gentle in their answer.

### **3. Pray –**

- Deciding and asking are important but won't make it happen. Gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The Spirit must give the growth, so we must ask Him.

- Pray that the Holy Spirit would make us aware of specific situations in which we fail to act with gentleness or considerateness. We can't be vague about this.

- Continue to pray some of the things we prayed earlier.

### **4. Memorize –**

- Psalm 119:11 “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”

- Memorizing the Word of God is a weapon against sin. Memorizing verses about gentleness will help you fight against the sin of not being gentle.



## Youth Sunday School – What is Kindness and Goodness – 4/11/21

- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 38: What is prayer? Prayer is pouring out our hearts to God in praise, petition, confession of sin, and thanksgiving. (Psalm 62:8)
  - Question 39: With what attitude should we pray? With love, perseverance, and gratefulness; in humble submission to God's will, knowing that, for the sake of Christ, he always hears our prayers. (Philippians 4:6)

### **Kindness and Goodness**

Galatians 5:22 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness"

#### *Discuss the path from Peace>Patience>Gentleness>Kindness and Goodness*

- Peace is freedom from God's wrath
  - Patience is godly response to ill treatment
    - Gentleness is godly demeanor towards people at all times
      - Kindness/goodness are active desire to recognize and meet the needs of others

*How do these traits build upon each other? What are some example situations where we would see some or all of these traits at work?*

#### *Discuss these differences between Kindness and Goodness*

- Kindness is a sincere desire for the happiness of others
- Goodness is the activity calculated to advance that happiness

*How can we be kind and yet not good?*

- Kindness is our inner disposition
- Goodness is kindness in action (words and deeds)

*Is it possible to be good without being kind? Why or why not? (no, if no kindness then no action coming from kindness in our lives, goodness always follows kindness)*

- Kindness is our awareness of those around us
- Goodness is deliberate deeds that are helpful to others
  - For example, Acts 10:38 "Jesus went about doing good"

*What might it look like to be aware of those needs around us but not taking action to help them?*

- Kindness is the thoughtfulness that we can express to them incidentally (without much thought, not costly) like smile/thank you/encouraging word
  - Kindness is not costly
- Goodness is to be continually sensitive to how we might meet the needs of those around us
  - Goodness is costly in some way

*What kinds of things can it cost us to do good to others?*

- Prayer

### **Kindness/Goodness Memory Verses**

Galatians 6:10 "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Titus 2:7 "Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works"

Titus 3:14 "And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful."

Hebrews 10:24 "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works "

- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 40: What should we pray? The whole Word of God directs and inspires us in what we should pray, including the prayer Jesus himself taught us. (Ephesians 3:14-21)
  - Question 41: What is the Lord's prayer? Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. (Matthew 6:9-13)

### **God's Unfailing Kindness**

*Kindness is the sincere desire for the happiness of others.*

*Goodness is kindness in action.*

### **God is kind to the ungrateful and the evil**

- Luke 6:35 "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil."
  - Who is ungrateful and evil apart from God's kindness? (everyone)
  - It is interesting to note that God's kindness to enemies is the motivation for us to be kind to them.

### **What do we learn about God's kindness in each of these verses?**

- Titus 3:4-7 "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (His kindness appeared in the person of Jesus Christ, his kindness opens the door for salvation to come to us)
  - Can we be saved apart from God's kindness? Why or why not? (No, his kindness [desire for our happiness] to us is why he would want to save us, if he didn't care about our happiness he wouldn't have sent Christ to carry out what would accomplish it)
  - What actions in this passage are God's goodness (kindness in action) to us? (saving us, washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit, sending Jesus to be our Savior, justifying us, giving us eternal life)
    - How was God's goodness costly? (death on the cross, etc.)

- Do we deserve God's goodness? Why or why not from this passage? (no, our works done in righteousness do not save, everything is undeserved and comes to us by God's kindness and mercy)

- Romans 2:4 "God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance" (it leads us to repentance)

- What is repentance? (to turn away from sin and towards God)

- Why is it kind for God to lead us to repentance? (because without repentance there is no forgiveness of sin, which is where we are truly happy and God knows that)

- What are some examples of kindnesses that God shows people to lead them to repentance? (growing up in a Christian home, hearing the gospel, believing friends/coworkers, the Word, churches, the Holy Spirit, hard circumstances, hitting rock bottom etc.)

- Ephesians 2:4-7 "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (God's kindness will be shown to believers for all eternity, it is only because of what Christ did that God can now demonstrate this eternal kindness to us)

- How do you think God will show kindness to believers in heaven? (by dwelling with them, providing for them, carrying out what it is that will make us happy)

- God made us so he intimately knows what will make us ultimately and truly happier than we can imagine- our minds will be blown!

- Psalm 31:19 "Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind!" (God's goodness is stored up for those who fear him)

- Does God show kindness/goodness to believers and unbelievers in the same way? (no)

- How does God show kindness to unbelievers? (the sun shines on them/rain waters their crops [and other means of common grace], God sent Jesus so that they would have a chance, God is patient with them and does not kill them immediately, God brings witnesses into their lives)

- How does God show kindness to believers? (saving us, leading us to repentance and faith, giving us the Spirit, sanctifying us, preparing heaven for us, working all things out for good in our lives, etc.)

- Prayer

- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 42: How is the Word of God to be read and heard? With diligence, preparation, and prayer; so that we may accept it with faith, store it in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.
- (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- Question 43: What are the sacraments or ordinances? The sacraments or ordinances given by God and instituted by Christ, namely baptism and the Lord's Supper, are visible signs and seals that we are bound together as a community of faith by his death and resurrection. By our use of them the Holy Spirit more fully declares and seals the promises of the gospel to us. (Romans 6:4, Luke 22:19-20)

### **Doing good at work and school**

*Kindness is the sincere desire for the happiness of others.*

*Goodness is kindness in action.*

**Fact 1:** God has prepared good works for us.

- Ephesians 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

- Who has God prepared good works for? (those in Christ Jesus/saved, gospel)

- These good works prepared for us are consistent with the abilities he's given us and the circumstances he's placed us in: either at work or school.

- Think about that. God has actually given you what you need in order to do the things he has for you to do. Both abilities, and circumstances.

- Why is this comforting? (because it can narrow our focus on what good to do, we don't have to do it all, also God set us up for success)

- Discuss what some good works are that you are well suited to do based either on your abilities or your circumstances?

- What kinds of areas should we then be seeking to do good works in? (areas we are well suited for based on either circumstances or abilities)

- People with various abilities meet various needs. What should this make us think about the members of the church? (we are one body with many members and each member is important to meet the various needs that God has graciously given them the abilities and circumstances to meet)

- What are some areas in the church that you might be well suited to serve in, now or someday?

**Fact 2:** Our jobs (school for you) are one of the biggest opportunities in our lives to do good to people.

- Can good deeds still be good deeds even if you are paid for them, i.e. at a job? (yes, good is still good, if we are meeting the needs of others and working for the happiness of others we are doing good)

- Most jobs exist to meet the ordinary needs of people. What are some examples?

- We should think of our vocation not as a necessary evil to pay the bills or an opportunity to become rich but as the primary path of our Christian walk wherein God has planned good deeds for us to do.

- We would be throwing half our lives away as far as fulfilling God's purpose if we do not see our work as part of our Christian walk.

- Full-time ministry is not the only area of life that God prepares works for us.

- If our vocation does not allow us to genuinely meet the needs of people we should consider a change.

- Remember this when thinking ahead to what job you eventually want to have.

- What are some examples of jobs that do not genuinely meet the needs of people? Are there many?

- "How do we view our job?" is a good question to ask ourselves.

- Right now, your job is school. How do you view school? Do you view it as an opportunity God has given for you to do good and meet the needs of others?

- Homemaking > This is a vocation and a rich area to do good deeds

- Many seemingly minute tasks in being a stay-at-home wife/mom render greater benefits to those they serve more than many other vocations.

- It also allows for the opportunity for many more good deeds outside the home

- Prayer

**For Next Time: - Read chapter 16 of Practice of Godliness, "Kindness and Goodness".**

**- Work on memory verse.**

**Kindness/Goodness Memory Verses**

Galatians 6:10 "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Titus 2:7 "Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works"

Titus 3:14 "And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful."

Hebrews 10:24 "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works"

- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 44: What is baptism? Baptism is the washing with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; it signifies and seals our adoption into Christ, our cleansing from sin, and our commitment to belong to the Lord and to his church. (Matthew 28:19)
  - Question 45: Is baptism with water the washing away of sin itself? No, only the blood of Christ and the renewal of the Holy Spirit can cleanse us from sin. (Luke 3:16)
    - It is out of this cleansing and renewal that Christ did that we go to serve others in goodness and kindness. Christ's goodness motivates our goodness.

### **Doing good at home**

*Kindness is the sincere desire for the happiness of others.*

*Goodness is kindness in action.*

#### ***1. Doing good deeds should start in the home.***

1 Timothy 5:8 "But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

- Discuss this verse. What are some observations?
- Who takes priority in this verse? Why do you think that is?
- What are some opportunities you have to do good at home?
- Who takes out the garbage in your home? Why?
  - Many distasteful and despised duties provide the most opportunity to do good deeds in the home.
  - What are some distasteful and despised duties in your home?



- Would it bless someone in your home to do these duties?

- Young people should begin serving others at home. Home is often one of the most difficult places to do good deeds. Why do you think that might be?

- Do you agree with these statements?

  - It is easier to clean up at church than dad's garage.

  - It is easier to babysit someone else than help with dishes.

- What needs to change in our perspective so that we don't feel this way?

- What is something specific you can change now to do good deeds in your home?

## ***2. Doing good deeds should prioritize the church.***

Galatians 6:10 "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

- Discuss this verse. What are some observations?

- Who are we to do good to? (everyone) Who are we especially to do good to? (those of the household of faith, believers) Why do you think that is? (it is our family, love for God includes a love for his people)

- When are we to do good? (as we have opportunity)

- What are some ways we can be a help to the operations of the church?

- What are some ways we can be a help to individual people of the church?

- What is something specific you can change now to do good deeds in the church or for someone in the church?

- Being truly good involves a deep concern for God's people, and we only have that concern if we are part of God's people through faith in Jesus.

- Prayer

**For Next Time: - Read chapter 16 of Practice of Godliness, "Kindness and Goodness".**

**- Work on memory verse.**

**Kindness/Goodness Memory Verses**

Galatians 6:10 "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Titus 2:7 "Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works"

Titus 3:14 "And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful."

Hebrews 10:24 "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works"

- Fighter verse

- Prayer

- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse

- Question 46: What is the Lord's Supper? Christ commanded all Christians to eat bread and to drink from the cup in thankful remembrance of him and his death. The Lord's Supper is a celebration of the presence of God in our midst; bringing us into communion with God and with one another; feeding and nourishing our souls. It also anticipates the day when we will eat and drink with Christ in his Father's kingdom. (1 Cor. 11:23-26)

- Question 47: Does the Lord's Supper add anything to Christ's atoning work? No, Christ died once for all. The Lord's Supper is a covenant meal celebrating Christ's atoning work; as it is also a means of strengthening our faith as we look to him, and a foretaste of the future feast. But those who take part with unrepentant hearts eat and drink judgment on themselves.

(1 Peter 3:18)

### **Doing good to all people**

*Kindness is the sincere desire for the happiness of others.*

*Goodness is kindness in action.*

Galatians 6:10 "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

- Who are we to do good to? (everyone)

- Discuss what kinds of people in your life that you have a hard time doing good towards (be general about who this is). What are some ways we could show kindness and goodness towards these people?

- Opportunities are everywhere so we must be sensitive to the Spirit as He opens up opportunities for us. Have you ever had a time where you really felt an urging that you should do something good for someone? What happened?

Impulsive and superficial (not really caring) responses to other's needs is not goodness. We must be rational and considerate, giving thought to how we can be good to others.

- What would some examples of impulsive or superficial responses be?

- How about rational and considerate responses?

True goodness is self-sacrificing of money/time/energy.

- We often have to give time/energy we feel like we don't have > it is an act of faith.
- What are some situations where we might have to give time/energy we “don’t have”?

Many people just need someone to listen to them

- How can we be good to people in how we listen?

Many people simply have no one to care for them.

- Psalm 142:4 "Look to the right and see:  
there is none who takes notice of me;  
no refuge remains to me;  
no one cares for my soul."

- More people than we know feel this way. How can we be good to them?

- We were once spiritually this way, in our sin and undeserving of anyone, especially God, to take notice of us.  
How was God good to us when no one cared for our soul?

True goodness is untiring. Galatians 6:9 “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

- In this verse we are looking to God for the reward and not just looking for the response of others.

If you have time, read Matthew 25:31-46.

- The test on judgment day is good deeds. These are necessary and vital evidences that prove the correctness of our faith and the sincerity of our professions.

- Our goodness doesn't save us, but everyone who is saved will grow in goodness. So, we can confidently say that without goodness no one will see the Lord.

- Prayer

**For Next Time: - Read chapter 16 of Practice of Godliness, "Kindness and Goodness".**

**- Work on memory verse.**

**Kindness/Goodness Memory Verses**

Galatians 6:10 "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

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Hebrews 10:24 "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works"

## Youth Sunday School – Watching for Opportunities to do Good – 5/23/21

- Fighter verse
- Prayer
- Briefly discuss New City Catechism and associated verse
  - Question 48: What is the Church? God chooses and preserves for himself a community elected for eternal life and united by faith, who love, follow, learn from, and worship God together. God sends out this community to proclaim the gospel and prefigure Christ's kingdom by the quality of their life together and their love for one another. (2 Thess. 2:13)
  - Question 49: Where is Christ now? Christ rose bodily from the grave on the third day after his death and is seated at the right hand of the Father, ruling his kingdom and interceding for us, until he returns to judge and renew the whole world. (Ephesians 1:20-21)

### **Watching for Opportunities**

*Kindness is the sincere desire for the happiness of others.*

*Goodness is kindness in action.*

We are not responsible for doing all the good that needs to be done in the world but for doing what God has planned for you. (See Ephesians 2:10)

Ways we can know what God has planned for us:

1. Scripture – God has described the kinds of good things he wants done in the world.

What does each verse describe as a good thing we should be on the watch for to do?

- James 1:27 "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world." (care for orphans and widows)

- Romans 12:13 "Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality." (help with the needs of other believers, be hospitable and welcoming specifically to strangers [the Greek word for hospitality is philoxenia which means love for strangers])

- 1 Timothy 6:18 "They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share" (generosity, sharing of ourselves and what we have)

2. Prayer – If we aren't sure what good we can do, God will give wisdom if we seek him for it.

- James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."

3. Evaluate our own gifts, talents, job (or school), and circumstances.

- 1 Peter 4:10 "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace"

- Romans 12:6 "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them"

#### Other points to remember

1. Our good works don't save us. We do good because of the good Jesus has done in saving those who would believe in Him for eternal life.

- Why can't our good works save us? (our sin demands justice, only perfection will stand on judgment day > the perfection of Christ given to us)

- If our good works don't save us why do we do good? (because we overflow in gratitude to God for saving us, because those who are saved have a new heart and God's spirit in them that always leads to good works, we want people to know Christ, we were bought with a price so should glorify God with our bodies, our goal is to become more like Christ and so we want to follow his example, etc.)

- 1 John 2:6 "whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."

- How does doing good works honor God? (it shows he is worth our obedience, it shows we want to do what please him, it honors Christ's example, it is an overflow of what God has done for us, since it doesn't earn salvation it shows gratitude/love to God, etc.)

2. Most opportunities come across the ordinary path of our day.

- What are some examples of this?

3. These opportunities are not interruptions in God's plan but part of that plan.

- How might God use the opportunities He gives us as part of His plan? (to change our hearts, to minister to us, to make us more like Christ, to give evidence to us that we are saved, to be a witness to those around us, to be the hands and feet of Christ to somebody, etc.)

4. We must acknowledge that we need God's grace to enlarge our souls and enable us to look beyond ourselves to the concerns and needs of those around us.

- We can't just make it happen on our own. God has to work.

A goal for us to pray for > Acts 9:36 "Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity."

- Let us pray that we would be described the way Tabitha was.

- Prayer

**For Next Time: - Do Bible study worksheet for next time on 1 Peter 4:10-11 (see also Romans 12:6-8)**

### **Kindness/Goodness Memory Verses**

Galatians 6:10 "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Titus 2:7 "Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works"

Titus 3:14 "And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful."

Hebrews 10:24 "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works"