

Journey Ten

OmniInfinity™

begin - return - continue

M. A. Helland



To Die For

*"**OMNIALINFINITY™** builds a bridge on which my head and my heart can shake hands. It combines deep principles with ancient practices, and is a pathway to knowing God in order to love Him. I encourage you to walk the path; cross the bridge."*

*Dr. Jim Altizer
Azusa Pacific University*

To Die For

journey elements

- [What Comes to Your Mind?](#)
- [Remember:](#) 1 John 4:8-9
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- [Journal 10.1:](#) The Greatest of These
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- [More Cool Stuff:](#) Mystery Solved
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what comes to your mind?

To Die For

I love it!
I'm so excited I could just die!
That is just to die for – I must have it!
 So Beautiful
 So Unique
 So Rare
 So Tasty

Obsession, Pursuit, Possession, Mine.

Cars, Food, Concert Tickets, Clothing and Shoes, Jewels, Art, Electronic Gadgets
Experiences, Reservations, Accomplishments, Acceptance, Entrance.
If we can't have it, we will just die!

Really?
But I love you so much.
But would I die for you?
Would I sacrifice for you?
Would you die for me?

Perhaps for a family member, a child
Some die for their countries, others for causes,
Heroes, Martyrs
They all find something worth dying for....Why?
So others might live.

And then there are some who risk it all for a thrill.

Love, Love, Love
Some say it makes the world go world.
Love is now god.
We all do strange and silly things for love
We surprise ourselves, we didn't know we had it in us.

Then we soon discover true love isn't about us at all.
 It's about sacrificing, giving, serving, waiting, holding on
 Seeking their best at our expense
 Giving it all, over and over and over again.
 Dying so they might live.

I love you that much!
But would I die for you?
Jesus said Yes! and He died so we might live.

We are To Die For.
That's what love looks like when
God is Love.

remember



1 John 4: 8-9

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. NIV

Use the space below to help you memorize the verse above.

For additional background on the *remember* element, see the [appendix](#).

Now write out the verses from:

Journey 1: **Psalm 145:3**

Journey 2: **Exodus 3: 14a**

Journey 3: **Revelation 1:8**

Journey 4: **Jeremiah 29:11**

Journey 5: **Joshua 1:9**

Journey 6: **Psalm 145:8-9**

Journey 7: **Hebrews 7:26**

Journey 8: **Psalm 94:2-3**

Journey 9: **Ephesians 1:7**

read

1 Corinthians 12-13, Ephesians 5-6

Please read all the above chapters through completely on three separate days, once from a



modern translation such as the *NIV* or *NAS*, once in a **modern paraphrase** such as *The Message*, and then **once again with a pad and pencil** by your side as you record your thoughts and observations. It is also helpful to **read the selections aloud**. As you read, underline words that describe who God is or names He is called.

This element is about **reading what it says** – try to put aside any preconceived ideas about what you think it says, or what you may have concluded based on other studies or classes. We are not saying those ideas are wrong, but for this Element, we just want to read it as if for the first time. Please **read for the storyline** – and see if you can then faithfully retell it in your own words.

First Reading: Modern Translation – which one did you use?

Second Reading: Modern Paraphrase – which one did you use?

Third Reading: Reading Notes

1 Corinthians 12:

1 Corinthians 13:

Ephesians 5:

Ephesians 6:

Descriptions of God:

Names used for God:

journal

10.1 The Greatest of These

How could a loving God.....?

In the last journey we discovered our sinfulness requires the **punishment demanded** by a Holy and Just God. We dare whisper that left to ourselves we get what we deserve – eternity in Hell.

How could a loving God.....?

Yet, God in his Mercy **provided an escape**, a rescue, a hand that helps us up so that we end up not getting what we deserve – eternity in Hell.

How could a loving God....?

God doesn't stop there. The Grace of God steps in and provides a hand that helps us out, **giving us gifts** instead of punishment, both for this present world and eternity. In an ungracious world, we receive undeserved forgiveness, redemption, freedom and Heaven.

How could a loving God.....?

At this point something rather unique and incredible happens....

We begin to realize that Christianity is not about man reaching up, working his way to be good enough for God...

But that God, **wants a relationship** with His creation, and has reached down to man and invited him into this relationship.

He then **provided the means** to the relationship, Jesus, not because it does anything for Him, But because it does everything for us.

How could a loving God.....?

Because God is love.

Love comes from God. Without Him, there would be no love at all.

Love begins and ends in God.

The world would know nothing of love if not for God.

No God, no love.

Know God, know love.

Love is the relational attribute and the model for all our relationships.

Love is the greatest of these,

The motive for all He does.

And we can only love because He first loved us.

Your turn:

Explain how we've changed "God is Love" into "Love is God".



analyze

Color Coded - The Sequel

1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. 12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1 Cor 13:1-13 NIV

Pick a colored highlighter for each of the following categories and then mark with the appropriate color the sections of the passage that qualify. (See Journey One: Analyze)

Category

Color

1. Godly pursuits
2. Unloving results
3. Characteristics of love
4. What will cease
5. What will be perfected or remain

Why do you think *love* is the greatest of these?

journal

10.2 True Love

Love, Love, Love

Love is all around, yet everyone is searching for it.

More songs and poetry are written about love than any other topic –
From unrequited love, to lost love, to searching for love, to finding lasting love –
True love seems so hard to find, so illusive, so unattainable...

Our attempts at human love are at best only a reflection of the Love of God.

Love always requires an object – a Beloved, for which it provides and seeks pleasure.
Since God is love,
Has been loving eternally,
And does not need anything outside Himself, who is His Beloved?

God lives and loves in the Land of the Trinity, each One loving each Other perfectly. This is beyond our human ability to comprehend, but it is the only way for God to be love as well as to give love perfectly.



Love requires relationship – another person, a Beloved.

God, the Trinity, lives to enjoy, honor, and serve One Another – this is why it was such a huge sacrifice for Jesus to come to earth and die, and for the Father and the Holy Spirit to allow it.

- God's Love gives,
- Freely,
- With no points, no expectation of reciprocity, unconditionally, sacrificially,
- In order to make the Beloved great, with no benefit to the lover.
- Prompted by Goodwill, with joy in the Beloved's benefit and well being
- No are no limits to His love.
- He loves us "In spite of" who we are or do, not "because of" who we are or do.

It's all about the Beloved

God's Love – Giving His Best so we can be our best.

There's so much to be said of God's love – we hardly ever begin to understand it.

Especially His **Jealous Love**,

His zeal to protect and preserve the love relationship with His supremely precious Beloved.
We understand jealousy.

It causes us to avenge any break in the relationship and to fight off competition for our love.
God does the same, only with perfect motives.

He seeks to fight off the idols in our lives, the world, our secret sins,
All substitutes for His love.

This is why he dealt so seriously with idol worship in the Old Testament,
Because He knows how dangerous it is for us to substitute for the Truth.
And why in the New Testament he threatens churches who lose their zeal for God.

He loves first.

His love initiates the personal relationship available to us with Him. We can only love because He first loved us.

God's Love is the most precious of His attributes to the human soul.

Because His love is a **Covenant love** – we are bound to Him so we have no fear in love.

Because His love is **Friendly love**, He seeks our benefit and delights in us.

He cares about us, about everything about us,

His love suffers, disciplines, waits, costs, sacrifices.

His love is **Mysterious love** – proven by Jesus death on the cross.

The love of God – **True love**

So hard to understand because we love so imperfectly.

Yet God gives us the ability thru His Spirit, as believers, to love as He does.

As we are moved from our imperfect love to His perfect love we become great witnesses to those who do not know Him as we do.

They will know we are Christ Followers because His Love shines through us.

True Love, Jealous Love, Mysterious Love.

Perfect Love.

Your turn:

Give an example from your own knowledge or experience of God's perfect true love, jealous love and mysterious love and as well as our own imperfect true, jealous and mysterious love.

Read and ponder the Love Verses below:

John 3:16 – God loves the world

Mark 12:30-31 – Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

John 13: 34-35 – Love One Another

John 15:13 – Greater Love

John 14:15 – If you Love Me

1 Peter 4:8 – Love Covers

Matthew 5: 43-45 – Love your Enemies

I Corinthians 13 – Unselfish Love

I John 4: 7-21 – God is Love

Ephesians 3: 17-18 – Love of Christ surpasses all





investigate

Love

Define: Please write a brief definition next to each of the above words using a regular dictionary, not a Bible dictionary. (Click on any word to link to dictionary.com)

- ∞ [Love](#)
- ∞ [Jealousy](#)
- ∞ [Sacrifice](#)
- ∞ [Unconditional](#)
- ∞ [Passion](#)
- ∞ [Dedication](#)
- ∞ [Devotion](#)
- ∞ [Joy](#)
- ∞ [Pleasure](#)
- ∞ [Care](#)
- ∞ [Cherish](#)
- ∞ [Welfare](#)
- ∞ [Delight](#)
- ∞ [Friendship](#)
- ∞ [Loyalty](#)
- ∞ [Gift](#)

Now write your own definition for To Die For below:

Review:

Read the following verses and answer the questions.

Who does God love?

Matthew 3:17, John 3:35, John 17:24

John 17:23, 1 John 3:1

John 3:16

Deuteronomy 7:6-9

Which of these verses cover or include you?

How would you describe God's love?

1 John 4:19

1 Chronicles 16:34, Psalm 119:76

Psalm 86:5, Psalm 103:8-10

Jeremiah 31:3, John 13:1

Romans 8:35-36

1 Corinthians 13:8, Exodus 15:13

Numbers 14:19, Psalm 86:5, Ephesians 2:4

Psalm 109:21

How does God express His Love to us?

Matthew 5:45

John 3:16, Galatians 2:20, 1 John 4:9-10

Romans 8:31-32, 37

Hebrews 12:5-6

James 1:12

What should our response be to God's love toward us?

1 John 4:7-8, 11-12, John 15:5-6

Hebrews 4:16

1 Peter 5:7

Matthew 6:25, 33-34

Ephesians 5:1-2

John 13:34, 15:9-17

Matthew 5:43-44

1 John 4:16-21

Romans 12:9-21

Conclude:

Summarize what you learned above in the three columns below.

God's love is

How God loves me

How I love God

10 things

To Die For

1. **Abba Father** is an Aramaic term that means *Dear Father* or *Daddy* and was used in a family relationship. Jesus considered God the Father his *Abba Father* as they have a loving father son relationship. This personal loving relationship is available to every believer through Jesus along with all the benefits Jesus Himself receives from the Father. ¹
2. **A. W. Tozer** – “There is a love content in Christianity. And discounting all the irresponsible things people do, there is nevertheless a deep, healing, emotional content in the Christian life. That’s why the Bible calls the Church, the Bride, and Christ, the Bridegroom. He means that His people should know His love and that we should feel it and sense it.” ²
3. **J. I. Packer** – “When we looked at God’s wisdom and we saw something of his mind; when we thought of his power, we saw something of his hand and his arm, when we considered his word, we learned about his mouth; but now, contemplating his love, we are to look into his heart.” ³
4. **David L. Hocking** – “No other quality of God’s character is so precious to the human soul than that of love. God’s love will bring comfort and encouragement to the most depressed heart and discouraged life. God loves us in ways most of us will never understand or ever appreciate.” ⁴
5. **Bruce L. Shelley** – “We say that “love is blind” – but never totally. We love because we find something lovable in another. We expect some return for our devotion. But God’s love is different. He loves without reasons – at least any reason known to men and women.” ⁵
6. **Love is a Many Splendored Thing.**
7. **Arthur W. Pink** – “How little real love there is for God. One chief reason for this is because our hearts are so little occupied with his wondrous love for his people.” ⁶
8. **James Montgomery Boice** – “There is no other way to know the love of God personally; therefore there is really no other way to know the love of God at all....God has decreed that it is only in Christ that his great, infinite, giving, sovereign and eternal love for sinners may be known.” ⁷
9. **Erwin McManus** – “Our souls crave intimacy. We are created to know God and to know love. It is love that moves God toward us and love that pulls us toward him. Follow love and it will guide you to God. Love is the beginning of all things.” ⁸
10. **The love in your heart** wasn’t put there to stay. Love isn’t love till you give it away. ⁹

Your turn:

Pick one or two of the above quotes or statements and share any insights or challenges it presents to you.

journal

10.3 The Game of Love

We have moved a long ways away from God's ideal of perfect love. Just watch any television sitcom, read any woman's magazine, log on to any dating or relationship website and you'll find all kinds of advice on how to play the game of love.

Women play games. Men play games. Even parents and children play games.

We're all looking for love but when we find it, it seems the chase, the pursuit, or the game, was much more satisfying than the end result.

Love is hard.

So we start the game all over again.

The reality of how we naturally love is 180 degrees from how God loves.

Human love is:

- **Manipulative, Controlling and Self Centered** – we use people to meet our needs.
- **Centered on our own self-interest**, protection, and needs gratification.
- **Demanding:** We want our way and that our needs should be met as proof of love.
- **Conditional:** We say, "I love you because" or "If you loved me you would". We are more comfortable with conditional love because we know where we stand. Conditional love sets rules and requires performance to earn love.
- **Lives in the past**, in our memory, and is romanticized and unrealistic.
- **Unforgiving**, keeps score, remembers wrongs and leads to bitterness.
- **Emotional** – our feelings determine our commitment and feelings come and go
- **Temporary and Transitory** – no long term commitment, moves on in tough times

When we get hurt

We get realistic, become desensitized, unwilling to risk, and blind to love.

We put up walls and our hearts become hardened.

But we need love,

Because God created us to receive His love,

But so often **we look to people to fill the love needs that only God's love can fill.**

When our human love is not returned it breaks our hearts.

Then we refuse to love others and God. We don't want to get hurt, eventually become indifferent, and think nobody cares. It becomes a vicious circle.

We want people to love us for who we are – the good things about us and we in turn will love them back based on these very same things.

But God still cares about us, even when we don't care about Him.

We don't care, because no one else cares.

Then we try to figure out what we can do to earn some love, anywhere, because we really want desperately for someone to care about us.



We've forgotten God is the source of love.

We don't know the truth about love. We believe the lies the world tells us and we end up seeking a counterfeit love.

And our relationships suffer. There are no winners in the Game of Love.

God is love. We love because He first loved us. That's where we need to start.

Your turn:

Evaluate your personal human love experience.

What types of human love have you given or received?

What games of love have you played

practice

Worship

Living in awe



We are all born worshipers; created to worship the God who created us.

This internal desire is often distracted and refocused on false gods and religions, idols made by our own hands, little gods of wood and stone. We lift up pursuits glorifying sex and pleasure, money and greed, success and power, celebrity and fame.

If nothing else, we worship ourselves and our stuff. Idols abound, all around, and they loudly demand first place in our lives.

The Ultimate Priority

God created all things to worship, glorify and enjoy Him forever. That includes you and me. Our default setting is to worship. We usually have no problem at all worshipping....Our problem and struggle is with whom or what we worship. God knew this and in Exodus 20 He makes it very clear whom we are to worship.

*1 And God spoke all these words: 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 3 **"You shall have no other gods before me.** 4 **"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.** 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.*

Jesus reaffirmed this same priority in Luke 10.

*25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" 27 He answered: " **'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'** " 28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."*

Worship is defined as **ascribing worth** to something, **giving it high value and esteem.** Other words we might use to describe worship include **honor, exaltation, and adoration.** When we worship the Most High God we affirm His supreme value, His worthiness, His true character. This is our job description, the reason for creation, our highest priority.

Psalms 19 says that even the heavens declare the glory of God, and in Luke 19, Jesus claims the rocks themselves would cry out their praise if the disciples were silenced.

Paul in Romans 1 describes the consequences of neglecting appropriate worship.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen.

The Bible includes many examples of people who worshiped God in both acceptable and unacceptable ways. We are urged in Romans 12 to be *living sacrifices* and in Hebrews 13 to offer up a *sacrifice of praise to God*. In Luke 10, Jesus encourages Martha to join Mary who is sitting at his feet listening to Him because she has chosen what is better.

In John 4 Jesus explains to the Samaritan Woman at the Well the following:

21 Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come **when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.** 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

We are to worship only God. He is our only audience as we show our allegiance, loyalty and appreciation to our King, Savior and Creator. We affirm His supreme eternal value, character and position in contrast to ourselves.

"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." Revelation 4:11 (NIV)

We are to worship only God.

Acceptable Worship

Worship, true worship, ascribing worth to our Most High God, is a spiritual practice of engagement. Most all of the other spiritual practices we have learned up to this point are used to prepare for us to worship or as part of the worship process. We need to actively participate. There is no real way to learn about worship until you do it.



When we worship we **catch a glimpse of the reality of God.**

Most often worship is confused with a church service, music and singing, an emotional response, or a place of worship. However, worship is not primarily an external activity, but an internal response. It can be assisted by music and liturgy, but the music and liturgy are not to be watched or to become an end in themselves. **They are to lead us into worship, not perform for us.**

Oftentimes we attend a worship service as a spectator, watching the worship service from the stands. Instead we need to realize **we are the participants and God is an audience of ONE.** God seeks people who will worship Him. He initiates and reveals Himself to us and we respond.

This is why it is so important to think rightly about God. **The better we know Him and understand what we can about Him, the better we can worship or ascribe accurate worth to Him.** We go to give glory, not to be blessed. The issue isn't did I get anything out of it, but did I give glory to God. Then the blessings come in response to our worship.

The foundation of true worship is based on redemption. Jesus came to seek and to save with the specific purpose of producing worshipping people. 1 Peter 2 accurately describes who we are and how we should act accordingly.

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

So why should we worship?

- It's in our job description – the reason we were created – our default setting (1 Peter 2:9)
- It's our highest priority (Rev. 4:8-11)
- It's something God desires – He is seeking worshippers (John 4:23)
- It produces lives that glorify God (Psalm 89:15-16)
- God requires it (Exodus 20:3, Luke 10:25-27)
- It is our only response to God's mercies (Romans 12:1)

Spirit and Truth

In John 4, Jesus explains to the Woman at the Well that the Father seeks those who worship in spirit and in truth. The place of worship, or the Temple, would no longer be the central focus.

19 "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." 21 Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

The place we worship or the format or liturgy of our worship is not as important as the state of our hearts when we worship. Worship should touch or bring forth passion for God. But we also need knowledge of God or there is no worship in truth. We need the balance of both passion and truth. "Only Spirit" worship leads to an overly emotional experience that wanes when the passion cools. "Only Truth" worship results in a dry, legalistic and joyless time with God.

Sincerity

As we seek to worship in spirit and truth our worship should be sincere, with pure motives, without hypocrisy or a divided heart. **The question should never be what did I get out of it, but did I give glory to God?** We should worship with our whole heart, guarding against just going through the motions.

Other attitudes necessary in worship include a humble and teachable spirit, surrender, sacrifice, denial, obedience, thankfulness, joy, and amazement.



Focus

We need to make every effort to engage our body, soul and spirit: our minds, emotions and actions as we worship. This is hard work and requires discipline and practice as we tend to wander, doze, multitask, critique, judge, do everything else but worship. Instead we should listen, think, and respond, expecting God to speak directly to us in worship. **Just being there is not enough.** Block out any possible distractions, remember why you're there.

Worship is our response to God's initiative toward us. We respond to his revelation to us through music, teaching, prayer, confession, and repentance. Our minds are engaged and our spirits are moved. We physically respond by standing, bowing, clapping, lifting our hands. We put our whole heart into it. Everything else can wait.

Confession

It's always important to come prepared to enter God's presence, prepared to respond to his initiative and revelation. That means we still or quiet our spirits in Silence and Confess all known sins as well as forgiving any others we have not yet forgiven. Sin and unforgiveness will short circuit our worship until we deal with them.

Our worship is not to be self centered, self styled or selfish. It is not to be designed around our needs. We are not to put our abilities, advantages or blessings above God.

Right knowledge of God

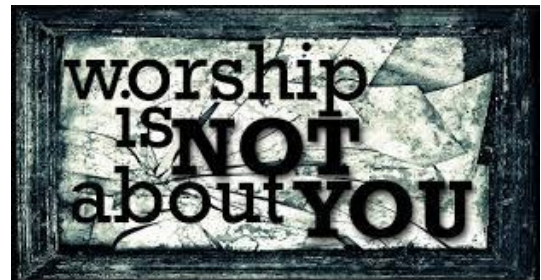
It is difficult to worship a God you do not know or think rightly about. That is why we study His attributes, His works, and His promises to us. That is why we read and study the Bible, share testimonies and participate in community. If we don't think rightly about Him we will not worship him rightly. **We cannot ascribe worth to a God we do not see or know as worthy.**

Recap of Worship Attitudes

- In Spirit and In Truth (John 4:23)
- Responsive to God's initiative
- Sincere (Matthew 5:8)
- Experiential, participatory, creative
- Focused and Engaged
- Wholehearted (Matthew 5:8, Mark 7:6, Acts 5:1-4)
- Right with God – Confession and Forgiveness
- Selfless, humble, sacrificial
- Teachable, obedient, thankful, joyful, in awe.

Recap of Worship Killers

- Hypocrisy (Matthew 18:8)
- Directed to false gods, idolatry
- False motives
- Unforgiveness
- Unconfessed sin, unrepentant
- Gimmicks
- In a self styled manner
- With a divided heart
- With activity/distraction/multitasking – Mary/Martha
- Self centered and selfish
- Focused on tradition instead of revelation
- Only as an observer, non participatory



Delight in the Lord

*"I delight greatly in the Lord. My soul rejoices in My God."
Isaiah 61:10*

What a wonderful expression of true worship, the delight and rejoicing that comes from one who has truly worshipped.....

We are commanded to do this very thing in Psalm 37:4
Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.

And again in Psalm 112:1
Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord and finds great delight in His commands.

How do we learn to delight greatly, to worship our King? What is involved in accomplishing the spiritual practice of worship?

Obviously, we now know it involves much more than just attending a worship service once a week, or sitting at home reading your Bible. Each of these activities is a good start, but being a Christ follower is not a spectator sport.

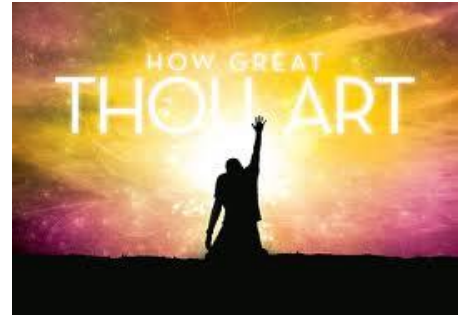
If we worship regularly the following changes begin to show up in our lives.

- Moves us from an attitude of getting to giving
- Changes us from a critical spectator to a cooperative participant
- Refocuses our worldly perspective to God's heavenly one.
- Purifies, inspires, and strengthens us to serve God, to go where He is going and do what He is doing.
- Simply put, we are transformed by God to be more like His Son, and our lives and lifestyles have become avenues of worship.
- Refocused on God with clarity, direction and obedience
- Faith energized and gifts mobilized

Whenever we have a divine encounter with God we are changed for the better. His thoughts and motives enter our hearts and minds and our faith is increased as we are strengthened. You never finish worshipping and you can never worship enough. That is why it is to be done regularly, with purpose. **Worship is to become our priority and our service then flows from our worship.**

We worship God for Who He is and Praise Him for what He has done. We remember, ponder, delight, thank, and stand in awe of Him. Once again, this is why a correct understanding of God's attributes is important. If you don't know who He is, you can't correctly ascribe to Him His worth. If you don't know what He has done and is doing, and is doing for you, you can't appropriately praise or thank Him.

Anything less than the truth in worship is idolatry and God hates idolatry. To worship is to see God as worthy, to ascribe to Him great worth. **We have not worshiped until His Spirit touches our spirit, and the beginning of that is to think rightly about God.**



Getting from Here to There

Interestingly enough, the “How” of worship is the least important issue. We can and should worship in the following three different ways:

- Personal worship – alone
- Gathered with other believers – corporate
- How we live our lives - our lifestyles can be a worship offering – Delighting in the Lord.

Many people confuse worship with a certain style of liturgy, music, or prayer, when those are only the form or vehicle to worship. There is no style of worship prescribed in the New Testament. Examples of praise and thanksgiving in the Bible include dancing, singing, parades, parties, prayer, building of altars, meals, rituals, sacrifices, feasts, artistic creations, offerings, and holidays. These are all forms of worship that were not used all the time, but at specific appropriate occasions.

The key is if the worship style moves us or assists us in praise and adoration.

Emotions should be brought into worship, but you may not be moved emotionally each time. Different physical stances, including standing, kneeling, lying prostrate, lifting up holy hands, looking up, looking down, open hands, folded hands, laying on of hands, or clapping of hands, and jumping up and down are all used. Many times the worship style is culturally based and newcomers should be sensitive to their response and judgment.

You only learn how to worship by participating in worship. We should commit to go regularly, understanding that it is a practice with a purpose. God seeks to transform us, to touch us with His spirit, as we do the one thing we were created to do – worship HIM.

Since worship engages our whole being we need to remember:

- Not just about going to church
- Not just being in the right place and the right time doing the right things
- Not focused around what will meet our needs
- Not manipulated or manipulating
- Regularly done with other believers, the fullest expression of the people of God
- Done through the power of the Holy Spirit, His Spirit touching our spirit
- It’s something we do, focus on, prepare for, so God can be glorified and we can be transformed
- It’s wholehearted, free, unafraid, expectant and truthful
- It’s the mark of a saving faith
- It’s only directed at the One True God through His Son, Jesus Christ.



Ways to Begin to Practice Worship

1. The spiritual practice of Worship begins with individual personal worship. This can be part of a daily quiet time, or done as you listen to music or walk in nature. Remember to focus on ascribing worth to God.
2. Start out with silence, then listen and observe. What attributes of God come to mind?
3. What names of God come to mind?
4. What works of God come to mind?
5. Verbally praise and thank Him for these. Focus on his majesty and awesomeness.
6. Listen expectantly for his initiative and respond to it. As God reveals Himself to you, respond in worship.
7. Acknowledge your position relative to his:
 - Finite meets Infinite
 - Creation meets Creator
 - Forgiven meets Forgiver
 - Delivered meets Deliverer
 - Sheep meets Shepherd
 - You get the idea!
8. Try different positions in your personal worship time. Lie prostrate on the floor, kneel, or lift up your hands to heaven.
9. You might design special individual worship retreats or getaways to a place where you can be still and focus.
10. Some great ideas for inspirational natural worship situations include: sunsets, cloud formations, mountains, oceans, starry nights, forests, underwater scenery, looking out an airplane window.....anywhere the amazing beauty of God's creation can be experienced.
11. Personal worship can only be learned by doing it. It is between you and God and is why he created you. Don't wait too long to begin your worship adventure.
12. Use the Psalms as a guide for your personal worship. Read them out loud and look for the many reasons the Psalmist worshipped and praised God. Make these reasons your own. At the end of this section there is a list of Psalms to use to get started.

Gathering Together

Almost everyone associates a church service with worship. Corporate worship usually incorporates a combination of music and singing, teaching or sermons, prayer, praise, giving and service.

The spiritual practice of Worship continues as we are commanded not to neglect gathering together, as well as to gather together in Jesus name. We are better together than we are apart. Gathering together shows God even more worth than we can show as individuals. He is worthy of our corporate worship.

There is no worship style prescribed in the New Testament. Yet, most Biblical examples show it should be **participatory, experiential, creative and focused on God, the Trinity.**

It is not a show that we observe. We should go prepared to worship and absorb any distractions with Thanksgiving.

Worship services vary in music style, teaching style, cultural styles, liturgy, complexity, posture, length, degree of formality, type of building, and number of worshippers. You can worship in a cathedral, in a warehouse, in a park and in a cave. Many believers around the world worship in secret. And yet, God accepts all true worship no matter where it comes from.

You can **check your worship afterwards** by answering these three questions.

1. Did I/we glorify God?
2. Did our worship build up the church/other participants?
3. Did our worship help us become more Christlike in our lives?

Do I have to go?

What if I don't feel like going to church?

Because of some of the obvious and well publicized excesses in some established Christian churches, there are periodically movements of believers who forgo regular church attendance altogether, relying on personal worship, or gatherings in small groups and house churches instead.

Because of technology there is now wide access to wonderful Christian teaching on video, podcast, television and over the internet at any time of day or night. Christian worship music is also easily and widely accessible.

Sometimes our lives are just difficult. Our culture works against our ability to get to church. We don't have time, are tired, angry, depressed, or getting the kids ready is too much hassle. God will understand, we feel we can just worship by ourselves, we don't like the people there, they don't do things the way we are used to, the Pastor's on vacation, or we can watch Church TV and be fed just fine.

Sometimes church is difficult, because people are difficult. Sometimes God gives us a season of solitude. We move and it's hard to find a good church. Where do you start?

The first thing to do is tell God how you feel. Then go anyway, go somewhere, visit lots of churches. **This is the sacrifice of worship, doing it when you don't feel like it.** Keep praying about it. Ask Him to help, to show you where you need to change, or to show you where to go to worship.

The hardest part of worship is remembering it is not about us, but about God. It is not an opiate, a place to go to make us feel better, to dull our pain, to numb us, to provide a place of escape. Sometimes it is real hard work.

God promises to meet all those needs, but through worship He will change us, we will see things differently, our faith will increase, our hope will be pumped up, our love will swell, and our thoughts will become His thoughts.

If you currently have no place to worship with others, talk to other believers, look in your local paper, check online websites, or just drop in to that church you drive by everyday. Many new Christ following communities or churches are not meeting in traditional church buildings but in schools, malls, business parks, storefronts, and many other kinds of places. Many have services at alternate times, not just on Sunday mornings. So, don't be afraid to break out of the traditional mold to find the place where God wants you to worship.

Recap of Why we gather for Worship:

- We are a royal priesthood and people (1 Peter 2:9-10)
- Priests offer spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5)
- Jesus promised to be with us when we gather in His Name. (Matthew 18:20)
- We are commanded to gather (Heb 10:24-25)
- Together we show greater honor or worship to God.
- Example of early believers in Acts

Sweet Smelling Aroma

The result of practicing both individual and corporate worship is that our lifestyles become more and more like Christ's. Our love and worship of God reveals itself in our obedience and service to Him. This is a lifelong process and begins as a response to the mercies we have received from God.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. 3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Romans 12:1-3 NIV

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. I Cor. 10:31 NIV

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. 1 Peter 2:9-12 NIV

For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. 2 Corinthians 2:15 NIV

Psalms and Other Resources to use for Personal Worship

Psalm 8	Psalm 19	Psalm 24
Psalm 29	Psalm 34	Psalm 47
Psalm 48	Psalm 65	Psalm 66
Psalm 89	Psalm 92	Psalm 93
Psalm 95	Psalm 96	Psalm 98
Psalm 99	Psalm 100	Psalm 103
Psalm 104	Psalm 105	Psalm 121
Psalm 135	Psalm 139	Psalm 145
Psalm 146	Psalm 147	Psalm 148
Psalm 149	Psalm 150	

Another excellent resource for personal worship information, study, and resources is at www.roadmapsforworship.com. There is also a *Roadmaps for Worship* book and DVD. All these resources are created and written by Dr. James Altizer.

Celebration

Living with Joy



Can you even imagine a spiritual practice that says its ok to have some fun, to laugh, party, dance, sing, make merry, enjoy each other's company, eat, eat, and eat some more?

Celebration is somewhat of a subset of the Spiritual Practice of Worship so we will include it here. Without celebration we would not have the strength to continue, we would miss the joy of the Lord. **Celebration provides a break from the struggles, the battles, the everydayness of our lives and gives us pause to thank God, to be grateful for all He has provided, to remember what's important and just enjoy each other.** It lifts our spirits and chases away the black clouds of sadness, if even just for a short time. We can relax, recharge, and be ready to go again.

Celebration is all about Joy. And Joy is what is going on in Heaven. Celebration gives us a little bit of heaven while we live out our purpose on earth. It adds a bit of gaiety to our lives, some festivity and hilarity, laughter, and pizzazz. **After all, with all we have been given through Christ, we should be the most fun, interesting, free and alive people on earth.** Not stuffy, grumpy, and boring as we have been perceived for centuries, whether deserved or not.

Celebration is carefree, focusing on the good things God has provided, the best things in others. Its what keeps us going and reminds us of our hope for the future. Paul encouraged the Philippians to think about things that were true, right, noble, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy, all things worthy of celebrating. **Celebration awakens our creativity and our sense of play. It allows us to enjoy the creativity of others.**

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus encouraged his followers not to worry about anything, that He would provide it all for them. The world had enough trouble, why should they add more to it. Instead we are to raise the bar and celebrate the life we have been given. It not only strengthens us with Joy, its contagious to others who marvel at our positivity in such negative times.

The church incorporates celebrations or holidays into its calendar to remember and worship God and acknowledge His works. Christmas, celebrating the birth or incarnation of Jesus and Easter, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus from the dead are the two main Christian holidays.

Sacraments

The church also celebrates sacraments as part of worship, remembering and honoring God with a visible outward act that commemorates an inward spiritual divine grace. **Sacraments remember or point to that which is sacred.** The two main sacraments in the Protestant Church are Baptism and Communion.

Water or Believer's Baptism is a one time event, an act of obedience and a public testimony for the believer about an inward experience and identification with Jesus including giving control of our lives over to God. It signifies serious repentance, change, dying to self and a desire to live fully for Christ. It also identifies the believer with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:11-12)

Communion is to be observed continually by the church until Jesus returns because Jesus told us to do so. Many churches celebrate it once a month and at special services, but some do it at every service. Others have a special service just for communion. (1 Cor. 11:24-26)

We are remembering Christ and all that He has done for us in his life, death and resurrection.

*And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this **in** remembrance of me."* 1 Corinthians 11:24

We are also to examine ourselves.

A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.
1 Corinthians 11:28

In addition **we are proclaiming His death** until He comes. In this way it is a statement of faith.

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:26

And finally, when we observe Communion **we show our participation in the body of Christ**. His life becomes our life and we become members of each other.

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.
1 Corinthians 10:16-17

Many churches celebrate Confirmation or a coming of age rite of passage that occurs in the pre teen years. This process usually includes classes and training, signaling a more mature faith. The Catholic Church celebrates additional sacraments including Penance, Marriage and Last Rites.



Ways to Begin to Practice Celebration

1. Make sure to participate in Communion during a worship service on a regular basis.
2. If you have not been baptized as a believer, talk to your pastor about how to do this at your church. A good way to find out is to observe other believer's as they are baptized and participate in their celebration.
3. Plan a celebration of your own. If you are not set up for this where you live, go to a restaurant, park, ballgame, etc.
4. Plan to have regular celebrations for birthdays, holidays, anniversaries, etc. If you already do this, plan to do something different. Change it up a bit.
5. Pick a day each week to celebrate in some way, or if that is too much, then once a month. It doesn't have to be a big event. This is just because you can. You don't need a reason, it's all about tapping into that heavenly Joy.
6. Remember to celebrate your accomplishments and those of others as you go through life. From a college degree to finishing a work project, or maybe you updated your yard, or restored your car, everything is worthy of celebrating.
7. Have spur of the moment celebrations – Call your friends, invite your neighbors, see what happens. These are the best kinds.

Personal Reflections on Worship and Celebration:

1. Read the following Psalms and share what you learn about the practice of Worship.

Psalm 34:

Psalm 66:

Psalm 92:

Psalm 95:

Psalm 100:

Psalm 103:

Psalm 145:

Psalm 150:

2. In what areas of your life do you have a tendency to worship something else in addition to or in place of God?
3. Evaluate the following elements of worship in your own personal experience. What can you do to strengthen each area in order to worship better?

Sincerity:

Focus:

Confession:

Right knowledge of God:

4. How do you currently participate in worship? What changes would you like to make in the way you worship? What changes would you like worship to make in you? What kind of control do you have over this?

5. What are some reasons you might want to skip church or corporate worship? What might motivate you to go or to start going again?

6. What are the benefits to you of personal and corporate worship? How has it impacted your life?

7. What are some celebrations that you participate in regularly? How do they bring you joy? How do you bring joy to them?

why?

Worship

Jesus – “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” John 4:23-24 NIV

John MacArthur – “Glorifying God is the most crucial element of worship. Worship is ascribing glory to God, recognizing His glory, and offering praise to Him for it.”¹⁰

Scott Morton – “Sundays began to change for me when I began to see corporate worship as a spiritual discipline – one which focused on giving, not getting. As I did with the other spiritual disciplines, I learned to make corporate worship a habit.”¹¹

God – “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: for I, your God, am a jealous God....” Exodus 20:3-4 NIV

Richard Foster – “We must have ‘wineskins’ that will embody our experience of worship. But the forms are not the worship; they only lead us into the worship. We are free in Christ to use whatever forms will enhance our worship, and if any form hinders us from experiencing the living Christ – too bad for the form.”¹²

Paul – “Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:1-2 NIV

Dallas Willard – “In worship we engage ourselves with, dwell upon, and express the greatness, beauty and goodness of God through thought and the use of words, rituals and symbols. We do this alone as well as in union with God’s people.”¹³

Jesus Christ is our one, true, worship Leader.

Richard Foster – “What we must see is that the real question in worship is not, ‘What will meet my need?’ The real question is, ‘What kind of worship does God call for?’ It is clear that God calls for whole hearted worship. And it is as reasonable to expect wholehearted worship to be physical as to expect it to be cerebral.”¹⁴

Your turn:

Pick one or two of the above quotes or statements and share any insights or challenges it presents to you.

why?

Celebration

John Ortberg – “Ironically, often the one thing that keeps me from experiencing joy is my preoccupation with self. The very selfishness that keeps me from pouring myself out for the joy of others also keeps me from noticing and delighting in the myriad of small gifts God offers each day.”¹⁵

Clement of Alexandria – “Worship is celebration.”

Moses – “When Pharaoh’s horses, chariots, and horsemen went into the sea, the Lord brought the waters of the sea back over them, but the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground. Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron’s sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing. Miriam sang to them, “Sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted, the horse and rider he has hurled into the sea.”
Exodus 15:20-21 NIV

King Solomon – “Then I realized that it is good for a man to eat and drink and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of his life God has given him. Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work – this is a gift of God. He seldom reflects on the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart.”
Ecclesiastes 5:18-20 NIV

Dallas Willard – “It is the completion of worship, for it dwells on the greatness of God as shown in his goodness to us. We engage in celebration when we enjoy ourselves, our life, our world, in conjunction with our faith and confidence in God’s greatness, beauty, and goodness. We concentrate on our life and world as God’s work and as God’s gift to us.”¹⁶

C. S. Lewis – “Joy is the serious business of heaven.”¹⁷

Richard Foster – “If celebration is primarily a corporate Discipline, and it brings such benefit to the people of God, how is it practiced? The question is a good one, for modern men and women have become so mechanized that we have snuffed out nearly all experiences of spontaneous joy. Most of our experiences of celebration are artificial, plastic.”¹⁸

I’ve got that joy, joy, joy, joy, down in my heart, down in my heart to stay.

Barabara Hoffman – “Stop worrying about the potholes in the road, and celebrate the journey.”

Unknown author of a near perfect quote – “I think one of the most perfect times of the year to celebrate is by far Christmas Day. After all, it’s the celebration of the most perfect birth of the most perfect man who ever walked this earth. Why not celebrate in a lavish way?”

[[[
SEP:

Your turn:

Pick one or two of the above quotes or statements and share any insights or challenges it presents to you.

journal

10.4 Who do you Love?

In John 13:34, Jesus commands his disciples to Love One Another. The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) explains how we are to Love our Neighbor. We are also to love our Enemies, our Husbands, Wives and Children, our Brothers and Sisters. And we are to love them with God's love, not human love.

That is a high calling and impossible without reliance on the Holy Spirit and the Love we ourselves receive from God. God's perfect relational love is our model. Only He can teach us and often He does this through other believers' examples.



C.S. Lewis in his book, *The Four Loves*, has described the four different kinds of love referred to in the Bible based on the definitions of the different Greek words used.

Affection – *Storge*, (Romans 12:10)

This is the humblest love, the love for those relationships that result from situations you are placed in by God, not of your own choosing, starting with your family. This is best represented by the instinctual, natural love a mother has for her newborn child. While it is usually centered around need based family relationships, it also can be expressed between coworkers, neighbors, classmates, fellow travelers along the road, even animals.

It is comfortable, ordinary and easy to take advantage of. It loves the unattractive and doesn't expect too much from anyone, is courteous and helpful. This is the Good Samaritan Love, the "just because" love, the seeing the goodness in all men and creation type of love, filling a need based love.

Friendship – *Philia* (John 11:3,16:27, 20:2, Matthew 10:37)

This is the least natural love and involves a choice between two individuals who have something in common. Most often referred to as brotherly or platonic love, it goes beyond companionship to a relationship where you do something together by choice. This is the kind of love Christ Followers have for each other.

There is a decision to bestow affection, friendship with others of common insights, interests, or tastes, with those who share the same truth as you. It's more than having casual friends or acquaintances. Together you separate yourselves from the masses. You have something to share and are traveling the same road together.

Friendship is free from the need to be needed. There is no jealousy, no qualifications, but there is appreciation and admiration. Outside of marriage, friendship only occurs between people of the same sex.

This is rarely the kind of love referred to in the Bible as required between people and God. God wants more than our chosen affection for Him.

Romantic – Eros

This is passionate, sexual, romantic love that desires the other for itself. It is more than sexual love but instead a total fascination with the Beloved. This love is often referred to as Begotten love created by God to spur the reproduction of species through intimate attraction and pleasure. While usually strong at the beginning of a relationship, it tends to burn out unless it is moved up a notch by focusing more on the Beloved than on itself.

From the beginning it is the most corrupted of the loves by sin because it uses others to satisfy needs instead of mutual pleasure. It is also the most sought after and celebrated of loves across the ages. The sin of lust is often confused with Romantic love.

These three loves occur naturally in fallen man – all originally given by God but have become distorted and debased by sin.

God's love – agape (1 Corinthians 13, John 3:16)

This is the unselfish, self-giving, outgoing love of God. It expresses His deep and constant love and interest towards an entirely unworthy mankind. This creates a holy, dedicated love in response back towards God, as well as a practical love towards others who also love God.

We can only know this love because He first loved us. It has been banished from human spirit until Holy Spirit can recreate it in us, which happens when we respond to Jesus and His Good News. Then it becomes the controlling and motivating factor in all three of the other loves that occur naturally in our being.

God's love can operate through believers in any venue; in the family, the workplace, the neighborhood, the school, the church, with those in need and with enemies. It permeates our hearts, minds, and wills to change our thoughts, actions, and feelings.

Agape love is totally focused on the well being of the Beloved. It does not consider itself AT ALL. This is true Christian Love – because of our personal experience as recipients of God's love we can love others as we are commanded to do by the Golden Rule and the Ten Commandments.

Agape love is what sets Christianity apart from all other religions and pagan spiritual practices. This is revealed through both God's love for us and our love for each other and the world. In fact, agape love was such an unknown idea to the Greeks that they had to find a new word to describe it.

**Here's the bottom line in most religions:**

1. A higher power lays out the conditions.
2. If we meet the conditions – we gain the love or miss the punishment.
3. If we follow the rules, jump through the hoops – we gain the rewards.
4. Because it is Conditional Acceptance it is therefore controllable, just like sinful man, like us and we can easily relate.
5. This produces conformity – keeps everyone in line – we know what we need to do.
6. It's easier in the long run. And seems fair in our limited understanding.

This is how Man would design a religion.
Stay in the Box and you'll be ok.

Instead, God with his Agape love, jumped right out of the box and made the first move.

God loves each of us as if there were only one of us. Augustine

We love because He first loved us.

Your turn:

Identify an example of a relationship where you have given and received Affection, Friendship and Romantic Love.

Identify a time you either received or gave Agape Love.

How does Agape love energize the 3 natural loves: Affection, Friendship and Romantic Love?

inventory

Your Relationships

Describe the roles you currently play in your life.
Evaluate each role as Mostly Giver, Mostly Taker or Give and Take.

Example: *Wife: Give/Take; Mother: Giver; Boss: Give/Take, Church Attender: Taker*

Do any of these roles conflict?

If you had a magic wand, which role would you make disappear? Why?

What role would you like to play that you are not currently playing? Why?

In general, in your relationships, are you usually the Gardener or the Flower?

What kinds of conditions do you put on relationships, whether knowingly or unknowingly?

Would you characterize most of your relationships as long and deep, or short and shallow?

What three things do you usually look to give to a relationship?

What three things do you usually look to take from a relationship?



journal

10.5 Love Hurts



"I need you."
 "My needs aren't being met."
 "You're so needy, so high maintenance."
 "I have needs, you know."

Human love is essentially need based. Each of our natural loves, Affection, Friendship, and Romantic Love, operate as need based loves until they are reenergized by God's perfect love.

The need based love lasts no longer than the need. It is conditional on our having a need that must be satisfied and then lasts through the resulting pleasure that comes when the need is satisfied.

It's only momentary and then viewed in the past. "I needed that." The object of our need love provides the satisfaction and pleasure, but once we are satisfied, the love is used up.

When we are thirsty, a drink of water satisfies our need and then is no longer necessary until the thirst reoccurs. Our love lasts no longer than our need.

Some of our needs may be permanent, recurrent and reciprocal which preserves certain relationships for a lifetime. As children we need our parents as we are growing up, but if we don't move on from selfish need love, when we grow up and they no longer meet our needs, we move on. In fact, even though they may then need us, if we have not learned unselfish love, we will still never call unless we need something.

Relationships built upon mutual selfish needs can survive for a time. While each one is looking to have their love needs met, they also are able to satisfy the other's love needs as long as they are getting what they need. Until they aren't.

Need Love can easily be manipulated by both parties by creating false needs or "strings attached" to control or produce outward behavior that looks like love, but isn't. Gifts, bribes, favoritism, withholding, guilt tripping, and approval are just a few of the ways Need Love controls and eventually breeds bitterness.

Parents and children,
 Husbands and wives,
 Brothers and sisters,
 Employers and employees,
 Teachers and students, church members, neighbors, and cliques in any setting.
 We all do it.

And Need Love also operates in our relationship with God

We see Him only as a means
 To providing for our needs
 As we cry out to him from our poverty or crisis.

We only turn to God in the tough times,

Only when there is something in it for us,
While the reality is that we need Him all the time.



It's our awareness of our need that is the problem.
When our awareness dies, our need dies, and our
relationship with God is neglected.

We don't need Him today, or so we think.

And when the crisis is over we forget about Him – until the next crisis.

Whatever we love tends to become a god in our lives. Our human love easily begins to claim divine authority and we take that as a voice from God Himself. We throw caution to the wind and follow our hearts because anything done for "love's sake" is worth any risk, any commitment.

It is possible to love too much, thus making idols of our loves. This happens even with people we are supposed to love like our families, children, spouse, and friends. If we only look to them to fulfill our needs, obsess over them, smother them, we have stepped over the line.

Love becomes our god.

We can love our pets and our country, our sports teams, our job, our homes, our cars, certain foods, drinks, recreational activities, hangouts, schools and on and on. We can love power and position, feelings, experiences, and seek to gain more and more of them.

But none will satisfy. The love is used up. The need returns.

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8 NIV

Your turn:

When we think of needs, we most often move to romantic or sexual love. There are many other kinds of Need Loves for which we seek satisfaction.

List some Need Loves or some needs you look to have someone or something satisfy in your life.

List some Need Loves you satisfy for someone else.

adventuring

Bless You!



To be blessed means to be favored by God, thus to Bless someone is to bestow a wish on them that they will experience the favor of God. The opposite of blessing someone is to curse. **The Beatitudes in Matthew 5 are the Blessings of Jesus**, but in Luke 6 they are included with corresponding woes or curses.

In Numbers 6:24-26 we find the **Priestly Blessing**.

*The LORD bless you and keep you
The LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you
The LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.*

The term can also be used to speak well of another, to give your approval, or grant someone an undeserved favor in some way. As representatives of the Most High God, we are His channels of blessing to others.

Our Adventuring for this journey is to bless someone and then try to make it a lifestyle.

Below you will find some ways to get started.

1. Meet a practical physical need to alleviate stress in someone's life. This could be anything from providing a meal, to mowing the lawn, to watching their children to driving them to an appointment.
2. Acknowledge either in person or in writing some specific action you saw or experienced someone do that went unnoticed or encouraged you. Affirm the person's value to you and to God.
3. Purchase something for someone else that you know they would like, just because.
4. Acknowledge and celebrate someone's birthday or anniversary with them.
5. Choose a life verse for a child or grandchild and then creatively remind them of it.
6. Recognize an undeveloped passion or talent in someone and then encourage them to develop it by paying for their schooling, or attendance at a conference, or travel to a foreign land.
7. If you have something that you don't need or use, give it to someone who would use it.
8. Visit a friend in the hospital or rest home. Then also include their roommate in your visit.
9. Help someone finish a project, or get one started.
10. Accompany someone as support while they navigate a distressing or difficult situation: hospital or doctor visit, court, jail, prison, foster care, etc.
11. Be present, pay attention, you will make someone's day.
12. Don't complain, but smile instead.

journal

10.6 The Power of Love



What would you do for love?
What would you do for someone you love?

The antidote for our selfish need based love is a healthy dose of God's gift based love.

God's Love is appreciative love – It values, worships and adores the Beloved.

God's Love is "Now love", in the present. The Beloved is to be preserved, not used up.

God's Love is wonder based and values beauty and esthetics.

God's Love is voluntary. He seeks out the Beloved to care for and serve.

God's Love is selfless love. The Beloved is greater than I.

The pleasure results from the loving – not from the satisfaction of the need.

Our goal, with the Holy Spirit's help, is to turn our Need Loves into Gift Loves in all our primary relationships with family, friends, and God. A good marriage should have Gift love in all four areas.

We all want to be loved for our cleverness, beauty, generosity, fairness, usefulness, whatever we think society deems socially worthy – we want to be loved for who we are, not what we can do.

But only God can truly love us like that – He sees our true worth and was willing to die to save it.

God has no needs to be filled, so does not transfer need loves to us. But He does communicate a share of his Gift Love to us in our "image of God" so we can, if even imperfectly, bestow it on others.

Our human imperfect gift love is often based on:

- **The goods that we can best bestow – sacrificially or not**

You come to my house and need a glass of water. I really want to show you how much I love you and instead give you 3 bags of Cheetos. I have plenty of water. I only have 3 bags of Cheetos and I really love Cheetos. This gift is a huge sacrifice for me.

- **Or that which we would like at best to receive ourselves**

Every year family members are asked to write up a Christmas list. We put things on a list we would like to receive or need. Then when we open our gifts we find nothing that we had put on the list. Instead we have received what the giver of the gift would like to have received.

- **Or that which fits with our preconceived image or picture of the life we would like the Beloved to lead.**

We are more than happy to helpout our children if they choose to go to the same college we went to, prepare for a career we think is valuable, live in a town nearby.

- **We often have an agenda even with our gift loves and they remain all about us.**

Yet God's gift love is wholly disinterested

His only agenda is that which is His Best for our Best

Divine Gift Love is the ability to love the naturally unlovable which is all of us

It even enables man to have a Gift love toward God

No one can give God anything He doesn't already have

Except ourselves

Our hearts and minds, and wills
Our obedience
We are His by right

He has provided us with free choice in such a way that we may freely gift love ourselves back to Him. That is how we love God.

Our problem is that we don't understand Godly Gift Love, this unselfish agape love, because we can't relate. We have no frame of reference. We love imperfectly.

Many of us have yet to fully experience natural earthly love.

We are always in some conflict over loving ourselves vs. loving someone else. Every human love has the possibility of being loved idolatrously and taking the place of God in our lives.

We are afraid it is either love God or love myself, that there is only so much love to go around, and when it is used up, it is gone.

But in reality, **love for God doesn't conflict with love for man**. Only when we love God and let Him love us, can we truly begin to love one another and ourselves.

The sum total of our Christian lives, our stories, our journeys, is learning to love God and others and learning to receive, in return, the love of God and others.

How do we Love God?

.... walk in all his ways, obey his commands, hold fast to him and serve him with all your heart and all your soul.

Love obeys, builds up, serves, follows, and feeds.

Love gives its best, never gives up, never harms, never fails.

Love is To Die For!

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. John 15:13 NIV

Your turn:

Please watch the video, **Beauty**, (<https://youtu.be/PAomHhbd6Sk>) and describe how love showed up. Have you ever been the recipient of something like this? Have you ever blessed another in a similar way?



lyrics

You might wonder why lyrics are included in a study like this.

I believe lyrics, or poetry put to music, as well as the accompanying music, have always been used by the Most High to impact our hearts and minds –

either by **our part in its creative process** –
 or through **our participation in its expression** –
 or through **our pleasure as a recipient** of its

sensory benefits.



Please try to access and listen to the musical versions on your own - **iTunes** and **youtube** are great online resources. If you are using the PDF version of this study and are connected to the internet, clicking on the song title will bring up a video of each song. The lyrics presented will not always be spiritual in their original context – but much can still be gained from applying them to how they describe and point to the Most High God.

[10,000 Reasons](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtwIT8JddM)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtwIT8JddM>

Lyrics and Music by Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin
 Performed by Matt Redman
 © 2011, EMI Publishing
 Youtube video uploaded by *MattRedmanVEVO*

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul
 Worship His holy name
 Sing like never before
 O my soul
 I'll worship Your holy name

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning
 It's time to sing Your song again
 Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me
 Let me be singing when the evening comes

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul
 Worship His holy name
 Sing like never before
 O my soul
 I'll worship Your holy name

You're rich in love, and You're slow to anger
 Your name is great, and Your heart is kind
 For all Your goodness I will keep on singing
 Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul
 Worship His holy name
 Sing like never before
 O my soul
 I'll worship Your holy name

And on that day when my strength is failing
 The end draws near and my time has come
 Still my soul will sing Your praise unending
 Ten thousand years and then forevermore

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul
 Worship His holy name
 Sing like never before
 O my soul
 I'll worship Your holy name

Jesus, I'll worship Your holy name
 Lord, I'll worship Your holy name

Sing like never before
 O my soul
 I'll worship Your holy name
 Jesus, I'll worship Your holy name
 I'll worship Your holy name

Matt Redman is an English Christian worship leader, songwriter and author based in Brighton, West Sussex, United Kingdom. In February 2011, Redman recorded his live album, *10,000 Reasons*, at LIFT - A Worship Leader Collective Event. In July 2012, the title track of this new live album topped the Billboard Christian Songs chart. It was Redman's first number one hit on American Contemporary Christian radio.

In 2013, he won two Grammy Awards for *10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)* for Best Contemporary Christian Music Song and Best Gospel/Contemporary Christian Music Performance.

Redman recalled the writing of the song with a Swedish friend of his, Jonas Myrin to *Worship Leader Magazine*. "He played me an idea for some of the chorus melody, and I found it immediately inspiring. In fact, it felt like a perfect fit for a song based on the opening of Psalm 103."

David lists in Psalm 103 several reasons why his heart is full of worship for God; He forgives our sins, heals our diseases, redeems our lives from the pit, crowns us with love and compassion, satisfies our desires and gives righteousness and justice.

So Redman and Myrin made a list of their own, noting they were barely scratching the surface of God's worth. "The point behind the song is this," explained Redman to *Worship Leader Magazine*. "If you wake up one morning and you cannot think of a reason to bring God some kind of offering of thanks or praise, then you can be sure there's something wrong at your end of the pipeline, and not his. We live beneath an unceasing flow of goodness, kindness, greatness, and holiness, and every day we're given reason after reason why Jesus is so completely and utterly worthy of our highest and best devotion."

The "10,000 reasons" of the title echoes the "10,000 years" of "*Amazing Grace*." "We already had the '10,000 reasons' lyric in verse two," explained Redman. "So when it got to writing verse three, and we were on the theme of eternity, the idea came to mirror that '10,000' number and at the same time give a nod to the old hymn."

The music video linked above was filmed in the Berlin church where German theologian and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a youth leader.¹⁹

Your turn:

What's on your list of 10,000 reasons?

[How Deep The Father's Love](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dr8LPQXdYv8>

Lyrics and Music by Stuart Townend
 Performed by Johnny Edwards
 © 1995 Thankyou Music
 Youtube video uploaded by Johnny Edwards

How deep the Father's love for us,
 How vast beyond all measure,
 That He should give His only Son^[SEP] To make a wretch His treasure.
 How great the pain of searing loss^[SEP]
 The Father turns His face away^[SEP]
 As wounds which mar the Chosen One^[SEP]
 Bring many sons to glory.

Behold the man upon a cross^[SEP]
 My sin upon His shoulders^[SEP]
 Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice^[SEP]
 Call out among the scoffers^[SEP]
 It was my sin that held Him there^[SEP]
 Until it was accomplished^[SEP]
 His dying breath has brought me life^[SEP]
 I know that it is finished.

I will not boast in anything^[SEP]
 No gifts, no power, no wisdom^[SEP]
 But I will boast in Jesus Christ^[SEP]
 His death and resurrection^[SEP]
 Why should I gain from His reward?^[SEP]
 I cannot give an answer^[SEP]
 But this I know with all my heart^[SEP]
 His wounds have paid my ransom.

Stuart Townend, son of a Church of England vicar in Halifax, has attended and regularly leads worship at the Church of Christ the King in Brighton. One area in which Stuart is making a significant contribution to the life of the church is in his songwriting, including such worship songs as *In Christ Alone* and *How Deep the Father's Love*.

Stuart did not start writing music until he was 22 years old. "I had a project to complete, and I had left it late. I picked the topic of worship and started to write. I had what I can only call a revelation and this led to my realizing there was a call on my life to write and lead worship. Until that moment, it had never crossed my mind." A great many worshippers are now very glad his homework was late.

Regarding *How Deep the Father's Love*, Stuart Townend shares the following on his website:

"Writing this song was an unusual experience for me. I'd already written quite a few songs for worship, but all in a more contemporary worship style, drawing from my own musical background. But I distinctly remember getting this feeling one day that I was going to write a hymn! Now, like most people, I am familiar with hymns - they form part of my church background, and I love the truth contained in many of them. But I don't go home at the end of a busy day and put on a hymns album! So I don't think of hymns as where I'm at musically at all!

Nevertheless, I'd been meditating on the cross, and in particular what it cost the Father to give up his beloved Son to a torturous death on a cross. And what was my part in it? Not only was it my sin that put him there, but if I'd lived at that time, it would probably have been me in that crowd, shouting with everyone else 'crucify him'. It just makes his sacrifice all the more personal, all the more amazing, and all the more humbling.

As I was thinking through this, I just began to sing the melody, and it flowed in the sort of way that makes you think you've pinched it from somewhere! So the melody was pretty instant, but the words took quite a bit of time, reworking things, trying to make every line as strong as I could.

Now I'm finding it gets used all over the world, by all sorts of churches; it seems to be as accessible to a traditional church as it is to a house church, and I'm excited by that. But it has perhaps branded me as

an old man before my time. It was fed back to me that at a conference a couple who loved the song were surprised to hear I was still alive..."²⁰

Your turn:

What is the most deeply loving thing you have ever done for someone else?
What is the most deeply loving thing someone else has done for you?

[I Can't Help Falling in Love with You](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPizIaBPhSg)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPizIaBPhSg>

Lyrics and Music by Hugo Peretti, George Dave Weiss, Luigi Creatore

Performed by Andrea Bocelli

© 1961 ImageM U.S. LLC

Youtube video uploaded by AndreaBocelliVEVO

Wise men say only fools rush in
But I can't help falling in love with you
Shall I stay, would it be a sin
If I can't help falling in love with you

Like a river flows surely to the sea
Darling, so it goes
Some things are meant to be

Take my hand, take my whole life too
For I can't help falling in love with you

Like a river flows surely to the sea
Darling, so it goes
Some things are meant to be

Take my hand, take my whole life too
For I can't help falling in love with you
For I can't help falling in love with you

I Can't Help Falling in Love with You is a pop song originally recorded by American singer Elvis Presley and published by his publishing company, Gladys Music. It was written by Hugo Peretti, Luigi Creatore, and George David Weiss and was featured in Elvis Presley's 1961 film, *Blue Hawaii*. The melody is based on *Plaisir d'amour* (1784), a popular romance by Jean Paul Egide Martini (1741–1816).

This was Elvis' most popular and famous love song, however it was not sung to his love interest in *Blue Hawaii*, but instead to his grandmother on the occasion of her birthday. Elvis presented her with a music box, which played the song when she opened it. Elvis then joined in and sang along. It eventually became a tradition for Elvis to sing this song to close his concerts.

UB40 covered this song in 1993 with a Reggae beat becoming a #1 hit in the US. A version by the Swedish Pop group A-Teens appeared on the soundtrack of the animated feature *Lilo and Stitch*, which - like the original version - was also set in Hawaii. In 1970, Andy Williams' version went to #3 in the UK. In 1976, it became a UK hit once again when The Stylistics version hit #4. Numerous other singers and bands of all styles covered this song, including world renown tenor, Andrea Bocelli.²¹

Your turn:

What does it mean to give up or let someone take your whole life?
What does that have to do with love?

[All You Need is Love](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OuYLGHkrBk)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OuYLGHkrBk

Lyrics and Music by John Lennon and Paul McCartney
Performed by Paul McCartney and Friends
1967© Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC
Youtube video uploaded by Johnny Pryce

Love, love, love,
Love, love, love,
Love, love, love.

There's nothing you can do that can't be done.
Nothing you can sing that can't be sung.
Nothing you can say,
But you can learn how to play the game - It's easy.

Nothing you can make that can't be made.
No one you can save that can't be saved.
Nothing you can do,
But you can learn
How to be you in time - It's easy.

All you need is love,
All you need is love,
All you need is love, love.
Love is all you need.

Love, love, love,
Love, love, love,
Love, love, love.

All you need is love,
All you need is love,
All you need is love, love.
Love is all you need.

There's nothing you can know that isn't known.
Nothing you can see that isn't shown.
There's nowhere you can be
That isn't where you're meant to be - It's easy.

All you need is love,
All you need is love,
All you need is love, love.
Love is all you need.

All you need is love.
All you need is love.
All you need is love, love.
Love is all you need.

Love is all you need.
Love is all you need.

All You Need Is Love is a song written by John Lennon and credited to Lennon–McCartney and was first performed by the Beatles on *Our World*, the first live global television link. Watched by over 150 million in 26 countries, the program was broadcast via satellite on June 25, 1967.

The BBC had previously commissioned the Beatles to write a song for the United Kingdom's contribution with a message understood by everyone. "It was an inspired song and they really wanted to give the world a message," said Brian Epstein. "The nice thing about it is that it cannot be misinterpreted. It is a clear message saying that love is everything."

According to journalist Jade Wright, "Lennon was fascinated by the power of slogans to unite people and never afraid to create art out of propaganda. When asked in 1971 whether songs like *Give Peace a*

Chance and Power to the People were propaganda songs, he answered: 'Sure. So was *All You Need Is Love*. I'm a revolutionary artist. My art is dedicated to change.'

The song became an anthem for a generation and is frequently used at weddings, in commercials and movies.²²

Your turn:

The concept of love originates with God.

List some universal human expressions of love.

Why is love always such a hot topic?

Is love really all we need? If not, what else do we need?

[A Thousand Miles](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cwkej79U3ek)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cwkej79U3ek>

Lyrics and Music by Vanessa Carlton

Performed by Vanessa Carlton

© 2000 Vanessa Carlton/Universal Music Publishing Group/Interscope Records

Youtube video uploaded by VanessaCarltonVEVO

Making my way downtown, walking fast
Faces pass and I'm home bound
Staring blankly ahead, just making my way
Making a way through the crowd

And I need you
And I miss you
And now I wonder

If I could fall into the sky
Do you think time would pass me by?
'Cause you know I'd walk a thousand miles
If I could just see you tonight

It's always times like these when I think of you
And I wonder if you ever think of me
'Cause every thing's so wrong and I don't belong
Living in your precious memory

'Cause I need you
And I miss you
And now I wonder

If I could fall into the sky
Do you think time would pass me by?
'Cause you know I'd walk a thousand miles
If I could just see you tonight

And I, I Don't wanna let you know,
I Drown in your memory,
I Don't wanna let this go, I, I don't
Making my way downtown, walking fast
Faces pass and I'm home bound
Staring blankly ahead, just making my way
Making a way through the crowd

And I need you
And I miss you
And now I wonder

If I could fall into the sky
 Do you think time would pass me by?
 'Cause you know I'd walk a thousand miles
 If I could just see you tonight

If I could fall into the sky
 Do you think time would pass me by?
 'Cause you know I'd walk a thousand miles
 If I could just see you tonight

A Thousand Miles is a pop song written by American singer Vanessa Carlton and recorded for her album *Be Not Nobody* (2002). It became Carlton's breakthrough hit and her signature song as well as one of the most popular songs of the year.

A Thousand Miles is a piano-driven pop song supported by a string orchestral arrangement, in which its protagonist (Carlton) pines for her lover, from whom she has been separated. Carlton said that she wrote the song about her grandfather who had earlier died. She has also called the song "a combination of reality and fantasy. It's about a love that so consumes you that you do anything for it. That's how I felt at that time".

In its finished form, the song was first heard during a scene in the Reese Witherspoon film *Legally Blonde* (2001). It also became popular amongst U.S. troops serving in Iraq, and in April 2003 the *Chicago Sun-Times* reported that it had become the most requested song on the radio station British Forces Broadcasting Service Middle East. Carlton responded, "Perhaps, *A Thousand Miles* conveys the feelings and longing and desperation that the U.S. soldiers feel for their loved ones. I don't know. But whatever peace I am able to bring to the hearts of the people at war is a contribution that I am proud of."²³

Your turn:

What would you do for love?

Hallelujah Chorus

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wp_RHnQ-jgU

Music by George Frideric Handel
 Lyrics by Charles Jennens
 1741 - Public Domain
 Performed by Opera Company of Philadelphia
 Youtube video uploaded by Opera Philadelphia

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.
 Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
 For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.
 Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
 Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

The kingdom of this world
 Is become the kingdom of our Lord,
 And of His Christ, and of His Christ;
 And He shall reign forever and ever,
 For ever and ever, forever and ever,

King of kings, and Lord of lords,
 King of kings, and Lord of lords,
 And Lord of lords,
 And He shall reign,
 And He shall reign forever and ever,
 King of kings, forever and ever,
 And Lord of lords,

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

And He shall reign forever and ever,
King of kings! and Lord of lords!

And He shall reign forever and ever,
King of kings! and Lord of lords!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

It has become a modern tradition for the *Hallelujah Chorus* to be performed during the Christmas season. In recent years, this majestic musical creation has been taken to the streets and the malls as choirs surprise shoppers in what has become known as a flash mob performance. The video above is just one example of many available online where this occurred.

At life's lowest ebb after several setbacks and in debt, George Frideric Handel set to work to compose a musical with lyrics taken from the Book of Isaiah and The Gospels. He intended to depict Christ's life, death resurrection eternal glory and the concept of redemption. For 24 days and nights he worked solidly, hardly eating, or sleeping, which resulted in the creation of his masterpiece, *The Messiah*. "I saw the great God himself, on his throne" Handel later recounted, "and all his company of Angels."

The Messiah was first performed at Fishamble Street, Dublin, as part of a charity series of concerts with Handel leading the performance from the harpsichord. Current publications of his work run 250 pages, including 20 choral numbers and more than 30 solos and instrumentals. It is an astounding accomplishment and one of the most popular works in the Western choral canon.

The most famous section is the *Hallelujah Chorus* whose lyrics are drawn from three passages in the New Testament Book of Revelation: 19:6, 11-15, 19-16. In many parts of the world it is the accepted practice for the audience to stand for this section of the performance. Tradition has it that this originated at *The Messiah*'s first performance in London when King George II stood up at the end of the *Hallelujah Chorus*, and the rest of the audience followed his lead.

The story goes that after the first performance of *The Messiah*, an enthusiastic member of the audience congratulated composer and director George Frederic Handel for producing such a wonderful piece of entertainment. "Entertainment!" Handel replied, "My purpose was not to entertain, but to teach them something."

He didn't write the *Messiah* for music historians or classical music geeks. In an age when illiteracy was widespread and written copies of the Bible were expensive and rare, he wrote it to tell the story of Jesus to ordinary people, through music, the language of the heart.

Handel died in 1759 and is buried in Westminster Abbey. *The Messiah* is arguably the greatest piece of Christian music ever written. The *Hallelujah Chorus* is instantly recognizable, even by those who do not consider themselves members of the Christian faith. It has become a part of our Christian cultural heritage.

The word hallelujah can be translated to mean Praise the Lord, Praise God, Praise to our God, or Thanks Be to God. It can also be used as a statement of praise or worship or as a call to worship as in, Praise the Lord, you People. Secular culture uses the term to express happiness that a thing hoped for or waited for has happened or in other words, to rejoice. ²⁴

Your turn:

What causes you to say "Hallelujah"?

more cool stuff

Mystery Solved



In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 3:4-6 NIV

...just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. Ephesians 5:25-27 NIV

Jesus Calls Them Out

Jesus and Peter had a revealing conversation in Matthew 16. Peter had finally realized Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.

Jesus then revealed that Peter's confession of faith would be the foundational belief for the building of His Church, and that even Hell would not be able to conquer it.

Later, as Jesus prepares his twelve disciples for his upcoming death and resurrection and the fact that He was going to leave them, He promises to send them the Holy Spirit to continue the work He had started, the building of His Church.

Finally, as Jesus is ascending to Heaven, He leaves them with the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 which begins "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...." The disciples, who were still worshiping in Jewish Synagogues in Jerusalem, had now been given a cross cultural and worldwide vision.

Acts 1:8 also records this commissioning, with Jesus commanding his disciples to wait to receive the Holy Spirit, and then "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth."

There were only 120 people at the first prayer meeting. They weren't quite sure what they were waiting for, but they were being obedient to Christ's command. (Acts 1:13-15) Ten days after Christ's ascension or return to Heaven, during the festival of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit arrived with great power, dramatically filling all the believers. (Acts 2:1-13). The Holy Spirit came down to place every believer into the body of Christ and to indwell every believer personally and permanently. At that moment they were able to speak in other tongues, the languages of the many pilgrims from other countries who had come to Jerusalem at Pentecost.

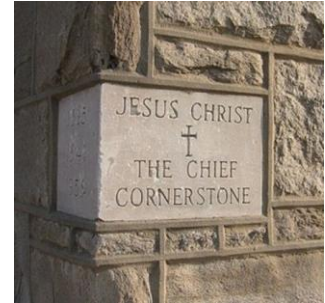
Peter, empowered by the Holy Spirit, preached the sermon of a lifetime and 3000 believed. (Acts 2:14-41). Jesus had begun to build His Church. Everyone, living or dead, who has ever put their faith in Jesus Christ from the day of Pentecost till now, is a member of the universal church, Christ's body, of which He is the head. (Ephesians 1:22-23) They were now the church, the *ekklésia*, an assembly of people called out from the world and to God.

That's what they had been waiting for.

I Will Build My Church

Today, about 2000 years later, Jesus is still at work through the Holy Spirit building his Church. Billions of Christ followers have lived and presently there are more believers alive on earth than all those who have died since that very first prayer meeting.

As we are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the currently unseen universal Church, (made up of all believers from all time) we also live out our faith through a local assembly of believers, a local church. While the universal church is a living organism, the local church will operate more like an organization. The local church, however large or small it may be, is the touch point or witness to the world of the greater universal church.



The **Book of Ephesians** has much to tell us about Church of Jesus Christ.

- The church is part of God's plan to bring everything under the authority of Christ. (1:10)
- There are no outsiders, all are welcome, both Gentiles and Jews. (2:14-22)
- The church is referred to as the Body of Christ, God's people and God's family. (1:23, 2:19, 4:15, 5:23-24)
- The church is a community who recognizes the Lordship of Christ and submits to him. (5:21-24)
- The church is the holy temple for the Lord, the place where God lives by His Spirit. (2:21-22, 4:6)
- The church is God's pure bride, the one he died for, cares for, and cherishes and who he will live in union with forever. (5:25-29)
- God seeks unity, harmony and peace as diverse believers live together by shared experience of the Spirit. (4:2-6)
- God has provided the people in the church with gifts to build up the body and bring it to perfection. (4:11-16)
- The church should be a showcase of forgiving grace. (2:7, 3:10)
- The church should showcase God's glory to the world as well as praise that Glory (3:21, 5:18-20)

The Church is people – Called out.

Christ is our **Shepherd** – we are His Sheep (John 10)
 Christ is the **Vine** – we are the Branches (John 15)
 Christ is the **Cornerstone** – we are the stones in the building (Ephesians 2)
 Christ is the **High Priest** – we are a Kingdom of Priests (1 Peter 2)
 Christ is the **Head** – we are the members of His Body (1 Cor 12)
 Christ is the **Bridegroom** – we are the Bride (Ephesians 5, Revelation 19)
 Christ is the **Heir** – we are the co-heirs (Hebrews 1)
 Christ is the **First Fruits** – we are the harvest (1 Cor 15)
 Christ is the **Master** – we are the servants (Colossian 4)

Local Expressions of a Universal Truth

Membership in the universal church is secured by trusting Jesus as your Savior. The assurance you receive from the Holy Spirit that you are now a member of the Body of Christ motivates you to identify with a local church where you can grow and serve.

The local church exists for a variety of purposes.

- To worship God (Rev. 2:1-7)
- To Minister to each other, encourage to love and good works (Heb 10:24-25)
- Carry out the Great Commission, preach the Gospel
- Care for those in need, widow, orphans, poor, etc. (James 1:27, 1 Timothy 5:1-6)
- Do good in the world (Gal. 6:10)
- Produce stable, holy Christians, including discipline, morals and purity of doctrine (Col. 1:28, 1 Cor 5, 2 Tim 2:16-18)
- Church leaders provide spiritual protection and blessing (1 Peter 5:1-4, Heb 13:17)

Local churches come in many varieties. As history teaches us, conflict and divisions have occurred over time on many levels. The Church is relevant and active across cultural, national, language, racial, tribal, or generational divisions. Different expressions of faith arise in different eras, regions, and cultures.

We can agree to disagree on issues that are not core theology. Many leaders use the following guide to help put things in proper perspective.

Die For – These are issues that change the heart of Christianity. Core doctrinal beliefs that if denied or changed would threaten relationship with God. Issues we would die for and might have to.

Divide For – These are the issues that are important enough to leave a local group and find another. Often issues of worship and music style, personality conflict, inability to respect or follow leadership, application or interpretation of Scripture in areas like baptism, role of women, spiritual gifts, church government, church vision, ministry to surrounding community and the world, moral behavior, legalism, etc.

Debate For – These are issues each person has the freedom to apply Scripture to their own circumstances or to give up their rights so others are not offended or weakened. Also, leadership issues regarding direction or decisions for the church can be included here.

Decide For – These are issues of personal choice without moral implications.

Don't Know Much about History

As you can imagine, volumes of resources have been collected and written about the history of the development and growth of the Christian Church. Much of the history of the Early Church is found in the **Book of Acts** and the other books of the New Testament. The survival, growth and worldwide expansion over time and through persecution, attack, heresy, splits, and political intrigue, as well as reform, of Jesus' Church is one of the great miracles pointing to the existence of God Himself.

In the Fullness of Time

Church history takes place during world history. Jesus did not randomly show up by accident, but God sent Him at just the right time (Galatians 4:4) into a unique period of history with perfect conditions for rapid spread of the Good News of Jesus.

- **Pax Romana:** Forced Roman time of peace through control, stability and order, leading to prosperity and wealth.
- **Roman Roads:** Provided infrastructure that allowed for easier travel and faster communication.
- **Roman Army:** Moved throughout the empire with efficiency and discipline. Many early believers were in the Roman Army.

- **Rome assimilated** Greek intellectual thinking, philosophy and language: *Koine* Greek was common language of entire empire and New Testament written in Greek for all to read.
- **Greek philosophers** sought truth and believed in transcendent realm.
- **Roman Religion:** Open to various religious beliefs as long as they didn't threaten the power of the Roman rulers. Jews had previously dispersed throughout the empire, setting up synagogues wherever they settled. These served as ministry jumping off points for Paul as he traveled throughout the Empire.



Together with Everything in Common

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. Acts 2: 42-47

The Disciples of Jesus became the Apostles of the Church. While many received Jesus message of hope and salvation, others responded with anger and persecution. The apostles began in Jerusalem, as Jesus commanded, in the temple and the synagogues, preaching and persuading their Jewish brethren and leaders. The book of Acts tells the story of the spread of the Gospel and the establishment of the Church from Jerusalem to Judea and Samara and then throughout the surrounding areas all the way to Rome.

It tells about the conversion of the greatest persecutor of all, Saul of Tarsus, to become Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles. Paul speaks of the Church as a mystery in Ephesians 3:6, because through Jesus, God brings together both believing Jews and Gentiles through the Holy Spirit's baptism into one entity, a brand new thing called the Church.

Allowing Gentiles into the Church wasn't the only challenge Jesus brought to the old and established traditions the Jewish believers brought with them into the Church. Throughout the New Testament we see struggles over issues dealing with required circumcision, the eating of specific foods, and the keeping of the law as opposed to salvation by grace.

The Gospel and then the Church served as a liberating force in a world steeped in prejudice and culturally demeaning practices, especially regarding women. With Jesus as their model, women such as Tabitha, Lydia, Priscilla, and Phoebe, just to name a few, held significant roles of leadership and discipleship in the early church.

The remainder of the first century AD saw the number of Jesus' followers, who were soon called "Christians," grow rapidly. Taking advantage of the extensive system of Roman roads and the time of peace, Paul went on numerous missionary journeys throughout the Roman Empire. He started local churches, then wrote letters back to them to offer further counsel and encouragement. Many of these letters, as well as those from the other Apostles, would become a major portion of the New Testament.

In the World you will have Tribulation

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets before you. Matthew 5:10-12

The Roman officials considered these new Christians just another Jewish sect and since Jews were renegades, they kept an eye on them. But by 100 AD, Christians were equally hated and persecuted by both the Romans and the Jews, and had gained their own individual status as a different religion.

Why were they so despised and unpopular?

- Seemingly arrogant **belief in ONE God** – the God of Israel
- **Refused to participate** in cultural customs the devalued human life including the sacrifice of infants, participation in sex orgies, and sacrifices to the vast pantheon of Roman gods.
- **Cultural misunderstanding** by Romans and others of Christian terms, such as “love feasts”, “brothers and sisters”, “body and blood”, etc.
- **Christians met in secret** - accused of cannibalism and incest
- **Challenged Roman social order** by valuing all life and welcoming lower classes, women, slaves and unwanted infants into their communities.
- **Christianity was new**, Judaism was old. Christianity had no temples, no sacrifices, no holy city.
- Considered unusual, unsafe and unpleasant.
- **Accused of atheism** because they rejected Roman gods and goddesses.



In 64 AD, the Emperor Nero blamed the burning of Rome on this new unpopular minority group called Christians, becoming the first to recognize it as a different religion. He persecuted the new Christians with imprisonment, torture, and death including both the Apostles Peter and Paul.

In 70 AD, Jerusalem was burned, the Temple was destroyed, and any survivors were sold as slaves. The Romans had had enough of the Jewish rebels violently attacking Roman strongholds in Galilee and Jerusalem. Both Christians and Jews were dispersed throughout the Roman Empire as slaves, taking their respective beliefs with them. The temple has yet to be rebuilt.

Even amidst the persecution, the Church grew. While many referred to Christian beliefs as outlandish superstitions, many more were drawn to its moral guidelines, its offer of equality and respect for all, and most of all, the opportunity to have a personal relationship with God.

Whatever Became of the 12 Apostles?

The details of the travels, ministries and martyrdoms of the disciples and apostles, as they sought to fulfill Jesus Great Commission are found in traditional early church sources. These traditions were recounted in the writings of the church fathers and the first official church historian Eusebius. These early Christian writers believed that each of the apostles had faced martyrdom faithfully without denying their faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.



PETER preached the Gospel in Pontus, Galatia, and Cappadocia (Turkey), Italy, and Asia and afterwards was martyred in Rome around 66 AD during the persecution of Emperor Nero. Peter was crucified, upside down at his request, since he did not feel he was worthy to die in the same manner as Jesus, his Lord.

ANDREW preached in modern day Georgia, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Greece where he is said to have been crucified suspended on an x shaped cross on an olive tree in Patras, a town in Achaia. After being whipped severely by seven soldiers they tied his body to the cross to prolong his agony. His followers reported that, when he was led toward the cross, Andrew saluted it in these words: "I have long desired and expected this happy hour. The cross has been consecrated by the body of Christ hanging on it." He continued to preach to his tormentors for two days until he expired.

THOMAS, known for doubting the resurrection of Christ until he could put his own fingers in the nail holes in Christ's hands, preached in the area east of Syria to the Medes, Persians, Hyrcanians, Bactrians, Margians (Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan) and even as far as India, where the ancient Marthoma Christians revere him as their founder. They claim he died after he was pierced through with the spears of four soldiers and was buried in the Indian city of Calamene.

PHILIP had a powerful ministry in Carthage, North Africa, and then in Asia Minor, preaching in Phrygia and Hierapolis during in the time of Domitian. While in Hierapolis, tradition says Philip and Bartholomew healed the Roman proconsul's wife. She then became a Christian causing her husband to order Philip and Bartholomew be put to death by crucifixion. Philip was crucified, but Bartholomew escaped martyrdom, when for some special reason the magistrates caused him to be taken down from the cross and dismissed. Philip's tomb is still to be found in the Turkish city of Hierapolis.

MATTHEW, a tax collector and Gospel writer, ministered in both Persia and Ethiopia. Matthew wrote his Gospel in the Hebrew, publishing it in Jerusalem. Some of the oldest reports say he was not martyred but died of natural causes in Hierees, a city near Tehran, Iran, while others say he was stabbed to death in Ethiopia.

BARTHOLOMEW, also known as Nathaniel, traveled widely to India with Thomas, where they delivered a copy of the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew, then back to Armenia, and also to Ethiopia and Southern Arabia. It is believed he was flayed with a whip, then crucified with his head downward, and then buried in Allanum, a town in modern day southern Georgia.

JAMES the Greater, a son of Zebedee and elder brother of the Apostle John, was a strong leader of the early church and the first Apostle to be martyred. He was beheaded by Herod in Jerusalem in 44-45 AD. Tradition states the Roman officer who guarded James watched amazed as James defended his faith at his trial. Later, the officer walked beside James to the place of execution. Overcome by conviction, he declared his new faith to the judge and knelt beside James to accept beheading as a Christian. James is said to have had a strong desire to evangelize Jewish slaves that had been sent to Spain and many believe he made a missionary trip there.

JAMES, the son of Alphaeus and possibly the brother of Matthew, is also known as James the Less or James the Younger. James is believed to have ministered in Syria, becoming the first bishop of the Syrian church. The Jewish historian Josephus reported that he was stoned and then clubbed to death. Others believe he was martyred in Ostrakine in Lower Egypt while preaching the Gospel.

SIMON the Zealot, was believed to have preached in Persia, Northern Africa, then Spain and England. There is also a Church tradition which says that he, along with the apostle Jude, preached together in Syria and Mesopotamia traveling as far as Persia where they were both martyred; Simon being sawn in two and Jude being killed with a halberd. Another strong Church tradition says that Simon was crucified and buried by the Romans in Caistor,

Lincolnshire, Britain around 61 AD.

JUDE/THADDAEUS preached to the people of Edessa, Armenia, Turkey and to all Mesopotamia. After the ascension of Jesus, Jude was one of the first apostles to leave Jerusalem for a foreign country, eventually witnessing to a foreign Gentile, ruler, King Abagaro of Edessa. He often traveled with the Simon and both may have been martyred together near Tabriz in modern day Iran. Other historians think Jude was martyred near Mt Ararat.

MATTHIAS was the apostle chosen to replace Judas. Tradition sends him to Syria with Andrew and to death by burning. Another tradition maintains that Matthias was stoned in Jerusalem by the Jews, and then beheaded. He, along with the apostles Jude, Bartholomew, Simon the Zealot and Andrew are credited by Armenian tradition as the apostles who evangelized Armenia.

JOHN, the disciple Jesus loved, is the only apostle believed to have died a natural death from old age. He was the leader of the church in the Ephesus area and is said to have taken care of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in his home. John faced martyrdom when he was boiled in a huge basin of boiling oil during a wave of persecution in Rome, instead being miraculously delivered from death. John was then banished by Domitian, the emperor, to the mines on the prison isle of Patmos. It was here he wrote his Gospel and his prophetic Book of Revelation. The apostle John was later freed and returned to serve as Bishop of Edessa in modern Turkey. He died as an old man, the only apostle to die peacefully.

Other Church Leaders:

PAUL suffered much in many his missionary efforts to what is modern day Greece, Turkey, and the surrounding areas. Paul also endured a lengthy imprisonment in Rome, allowing him to write his many epistles to the churches he had formed throughout the Roman Empire. These letters, which taught many of the foundational doctrines of Christianity, form a large portion of the New Testament. After being released from imprisonment in 62 AD, it is believed Paul visited Gaul, Spain and possibly, England. When Paul returned to Rome, he was imprisoned again for nine months with the apostle Peter in the Mamertine prison. It was in Rome that the apostle Paul suffered martyrdom when by order of the Emperor Nero, Paul was beheaded with a sword in 67 AD.



JAMES, the brother of Jesus, also known as James the Just, became a follower of Jesus after a personal post resurrection appearance. The writer of the New Testament Book of James, he became a leader in the Jerusalem church after Peter's arrest and departure from Jerusalem. He remained in this position, overseeing the church until he was martyred in 62 AD. James was martyred as the result of some of the same Roman Jewish intrigue that had preceded Jesus crucifixion. One tradition states he was thrown over a hundred feet down from the southeast pinnacle of the Temple when he refused to deny his faith in Christ. When they discovered that he survived the fall, his enemies beat James to death with a fuller's club. This was the same pinnacle where Satan had taken Jesus during the Temptation. Another tradition states the current Jewish High Priest, Ananus, called the Sanhedrin together and accused James and others of violating the law and had them all stoned, all while the new Roman proconsul was on his way to Jerusalem.

LUKE, a gentile convert of Paul's, first met the Apostle in Troas on Paul's second missionary journey. On Paul's third missionary journey, Luke was living in Philippi. During Paul's first and second imprisonments in Rome, Luke, a physician, was a constant companion of the Apostle Paul. As Paul's medical advisor he undoubtedly prolonged Paul's life and rescued him from many a serious illness. Highly educated and an astute historian with an eye for detail, he authored both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. There are several Church traditions as

to his manner and place of death. One is that he died peacefully in Boeotia, Greece, at the age of 84 and the other is that he was crucified with the apostle Andrew at Patras, Greece.

BARNABAS traveled with Paul on his missionary journeys. After his second missionary journey, he and his nephew John Mark returned to his native island, Cyprus, where previously he and Paul had founded the Church of Cyprus on their first missionary journey. In 61 AD, Jews leaders visiting his native town of Salamis and became so exasperated and jealous of his extraordinary success in disputing in the synagogue, that they dragged him out, tortured him and stoned him to death. He was secretly buried by his nephew John Mark.

JOHN MARK, the nephew of Barnabas, was the writer of the Gospel of Mark and a translator for the Apostle Peter, the source for the Gospel. His father was Roman and his mother was a Jewish Christian with whom he lived in Jerusalem. John Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas for a short time on their first missionary journey. Later he returned to Cyprus with his uncle Barnabas and was present when he was martyred. It is possible that the apostle Peter was the one who led him to Christ Jesus. He was also a "great comfort" to the apostle Paul during his imprisonment in Rome and is also seen with the apostle Peter in Babylon. After the deaths of the apostles Peter and Paul in Rome, John Mark went to Alexandria, a Greco-Roman city in Egypt with a large Jewish population and became the first bishop or pastor of the church at Alexandria. John Mark was martyred in Alexandria, Egypt, in 68 AD, by being dragged by horses through the streets until he was dead.

LAZARUS, Jesus' good friend whom he also raised from the dead, is believed to have fled to Cyprus to avoid the revenge of the Jews and Romans after so many came to believe in Jesus through this miracle. In Cyprus, Lazarus became the spiritual leader of the church in Citium where he was the bishop for thirty years. He may have also died in Citium in 63 AD. Another Church tradition says Lazarus traveled from Cyprus to Marseilles, France, ministered there as Bishop of the church and died there.

Growing Pains

In the **second and third centuries**, Christians struggled with **persecution** from outside the church and **doctrinal debates** from within the church. The next generation of Christian leaders, who are now called the Church or Apostolic Fathers, began to respond to the charges critics were making against them. They weren't trying to convert anyone, they were just trying to prove they weren't criminals.

In addition they needed to correct and make arguments against false teachings spreading within the church. The New Testament was formed and a system was established to guard against wrong interpretations of Christian teachings.

The farther in time the Church moved away from the early eyewitnesses and Apostles time, questions were pondered that still impact us today.

- How do we deal with our **present circumstances** and needs in ways that remain faithful to God's past works?
- How do we **balance past traditions** vs. present circumstances?
- How do we **remain faithful to the testimony** of the apostolic eyewitnesses who walked with Jesus?

More Room, Please!

The earliest Christian church **gatherings took place in large homes**, usually owned by wealthy benefactors. New Believers were baptized soon after their confession of faith. These groups of 50 to 100 were led or governed by a group of equal elders. Each city had one church.

Two hundred years later churches had grown in size to the extent they needed to be organized above the local level. There were many church meetings in each city, and many had their own buildings. New believers were required to have three years of training prior to baptism.

Each **city had one elder or bishop** to oversee all the church groups in their city. These leaders saw themselves as protectors of the Apostles writings, the keepers of the faith. Their power expanded, especially in the larger cities, and they began to call themselves Popes, or *father* in Latin. The priesthood of church leaders was beginning to supplant the priesthood of all believers.

Of Conflicts, Creeds and Councils

Defending Christian truth as revealed by Jesus and then through the Holy Spirit through the Apostles and early Church Fathers has always been one of the major efforts of the church throughout its history. This battle has been waged throughout the history of the Christian Church as error and heresy creep in from within and without the Church. It still occurs even today.

Interestingly these ideas show up again and again and fall into major areas. It is important to understand them and why they are incorrect so we will recognize them as they appear in the trappings of our current times and cultures.

Here is a list of the **areas where misunderstanding caused wrong thinking or heresy** and continues to do so today:

- Jesus as the God Man, fully divine and human at the same time.
- Attempts to understand the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Nature of man and the universe
- Sin nature of man, original sin and free will
- Nature of relationship between church and state
- Protection of original intent of scriptures, translations, cultural application and interpretation
- Steps of salvation (repentance and grace vs. works and legalism)
- What should be included in the Scriptures and their authority
- New revelation and special or secret knowledge
- Assurance of salvation and eternal security
- Church government, role of power and authority in the church, priesthood of the believer.
- Sacraments: modes and participation
- Significance of spiritual growth and glorifying God
- Corruption, power, and purity in church leadership
- Church's relationship and participation in world and culture

The early church struggled with choosing the proper words when defining the Godhead. It was of most importance that Jesus Christ was portrayed accurately in all His Glory and Power as both God and Man, as well as the centrality of his physical resurrection. The concept of the Trinity is difficult to understand in full, because it is a God idea, beyond our complete human understanding, so this was an area ripe for wrong thinking and needed much clarification.

To counter large disputes and divisions, periodically church leaders gathered together under the Spirit's direction to solidify important doctrines. The resulting decisions were published as Creeds or Confessions.



- **Council at Jerusalem**, 49/50: Gentiles do not need to become Jews to follow Christ
- **Council at Nicaea**, 325: Confession of faith in Trinity and FULL Deity of Jesus Christ
- **Council at Hippo**, 393, and Council at Carthage, 397: Affirm and accept official list of 27 books of New Testament as Canon of Scripture.
- **First Council at Constantinople**, 381: Affirmed FULL Humanity of Jesus Christ and approved Nicene Creed
- **Council at Ephesus**, 431: Denounced idea that Jesus was two separate persons, one human and one divine.
- **Council at Chalcedon**, 451: Condemned one nature view of Christ and agreed Christ was one person with two natures; one human and one divine.
- **Second Council at Constantinople**, 553: Reaffirmed once and for all, decision of Council at Ephesus.
- **Third Council at Constantinople**, 681: Reaffirmed decisions at Council of Chalcedon.
- **Second Council at Nicaea**, 787: Affirmed Jesus was God's Son by nature and allowed icons to be revered by not worshipped.

To read the actual [Creeds and Confessions](#) created to reaffirm truth and correct heresy or wrong thinking follow this [link](#).

Selected Important Early Heresies

The following list is from CARM.org (Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry.) These beliefs were wrong or heretical teachings in the early church that reappear throughout history in different forms. Many still exist today.

- **Adoptionism**: God granted Jesus powers and then adopted him as a Son.
- **Albigenses**: Reincarnation and two gods: one good and other evil.
- **Apollinarianism**: Jesus' divine will overshadowed and replaced the human.
- **Arianism**: Jesus was a lesser, created being.
- **Docetism**: Jesus was divine but only seemed to be human.
- **Donatism**: Validity of sacraments depends on character of the minister.
- **Gnosticism**: Dualism of good and bad and special knowledge for salvation.
- **Kenosis**: Jesus gave up some divine attributes while on earth.
- **Modalism**: God is one person in three modes.
- **Monarchianism**: God is one person.
- **Monophysitism**: Jesus had only one nature: divine.
- **Nestorianism**: Jesus was two persons.
- **Patripassionism**: The Father suffered on the cross.
- **Pelagianism**: Man is unaffected by the fall and can keep all of God's laws.
- **Semi-Pelagianism**: Man and God cooperate to achieve man's salvation.
- **Socinianism**: Denial of the Trinity. Jesus is a deified man.
- **Subordinationism**: The Son is lesser than the Father in essence and or attributes.
- **Tritheism**: The Trinity is really three separate gods.

Turning, Turning

In 313, following a major military victory he believed Jesus had granted him, the **Roman Co-Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan**, which allowed Christians and all others to worship as they desire. Constantine claimed to have converted to Christianity, but saw Christ as more of a good luck charm. The **Christian religion became legal, persecution ceased**, priests were granted power and influence and masses of citizens now found it convenient to convert to the emperor's faith.

There was a price to pay....not all believers were convinced or willing to sacrifice anymore as the masses joined out of obedience to the Emperor and not personal confession of faith. Paganism crept in as did political ambition and secularization. Being the officially favored church of the state demanded obedience to the state in many areas. The battle between church and state had begun.

One day Christians were hiding in the catacombs, and the next they were dining at the palace. Through this holy alliance, Christianity rose in political and spiritual influence and power until it emerged as the "Christendom" that ruled throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

As the Western Roman Empire began to crumble under the masses of migrating barbarians in its far-reaching provinces, the church in those areas began to take over many of the governing responsibilities thus increasing its power and influence.

When Rome finally fell to the Goths in 410, the people were shaken to the core and once again, they blamed Christians and their God for this loss of power. **They equated the power of God to the power of the Roman Empire.**

A monk name **Augustine (354 – 430)**, overseer of Hippo in North Africa, had written a book called the **City of God**, explaining the difference between life in this world, The City of Man, and life in the next, The City of God. He encouraged believers to focus on the City of God and not identify with any human regime. Christianity was presented as a credible belief system without any responsibility for the fall of Rome. He also helped explain the doctrine of grace, the church and the Trinity advocating the concept of original sin as part of our human nature.

One of the most influential minds of Christian history, he developed Christian theology as an academic discipline.

To the Desert

Another result to the dilution of Christian commitment in the absence of persecution and in the presence of power was the **Spirit's leading many to flee from the worldliness of the church**. These believers would not participate in a corrupt institution and removed themselves to the deserts of Egypt and Asia Minor. Monastic Christianity struck back at imperial Christianity. To them, a Christian Rome was no better than Babylon.

Many became scholars, painstakingly translating and copying early Christian Scripture and documents into Latin. Monks and nuns established monasteries and convents, religious communities to seek God's glory in remote environments away from seats of power, greed and influence.

Later on monasteries and convents in were started in pagan areas. Their farming methods were more advanced and the local people were soon asking questions about farming that turned into curiosity about faith. The various groups or Orders of monks and nuns began schools and hospitals, served the poor, the sick and the elderly. They protected the Scriptures and called out corruption. They prayed, studied and protected the Scriptures for future generations.

Filling the Darkness and Chaos

The Fall of the Western Roman Empire ushered in the Middle Ages. With no central government in place, no police, no army, and no monetary system, the feudal system restored order in Europe. Land became the means of wealth. Landowners became lords, built manors and plantations that were protected by mounted bands of knights. Peasants became vassals and farmed the lord's land in return for bare minimum provisions and protection. In addition, the lords paid priests to serve their manors and once again obedience to earthly lords supplanted obedience to the heavenly lord.

People could not read, so the priests relied on statues, stained glass and plays to teach people about God. Church buildings became Bibles in stone, images and architecture replaced the preached and written Word.



During the Middle Ages the Gospel spread throughout Europe, to France, Germany, England and Ireland. **Christianity became its own political power based in Rome**, granting political favors and bestowing blessings in exchange for power, influence and land.

The Western and Eastern branches of the church, Rome vs. Constantinople, moved farther and farther apart leading to a church wide split that exists to the day. Differences in theology, practice and who was in charge could not be tolerated and each considered the other heretical.

Losing their Way along the Way

A common medieval practice to prove one's desire to turn from sin was to go on a pilgrimage. While there were many local shrines available for this, the **ultimate pilgrimage was to go to Jerusalem**. To impede a person's ability to make this pilgrimage was to put their eternal salvation at risk.

Islam had spread throughout Arabia, Africa, Spain and Portugal following the death of Muhammad in 622. Jerusalem fell in 638 and by 711 so had Spain and Portugal. **Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem were being harassed and charged high tariffs to pass**. The Turks, now in charge of the area were much more brutal and fanatical than the earlier Arabs. The Eastern Church in Constantinople was threatened and the Holy Places in Jerusalem were out of reach.

And so the Crusades began.....

Between 1095 and 1291 there were **seven major crusades**, of which only the first was really successful. A dark blot on the history of the Church, many believed they were truly following Christ. The results impacted the Church in unexpected ways.

Christian Europe was transformed as Crusaders returned with new foods, clothing, books, and trading routes. Trade revived, and a middle class began to take hold. Kings began to tax their subjects, gaining more power and money. People's loyalties were no longer to the institution of the Church. Government and society had returned and displaced a seemingly corrupt, and greedy church.

The credibility and legitimacy of the Roman Catholic Church was in question. Now split away from the Eastern Orthodox Church, in 1309 a second Pope was installed in Avignon, France, while another ruled from Rome. This Great Schism lasted until 1417.

Besides political division in the church, corruption and fraud infected the clergy as they bought and sold forgiveness through indulgences and spent fortunes acquiring relics for their cathedrals. Immorality was rampant and brought much ridicule. When it came to meeting people's physical and spiritual needs, their answers and actions were empty and they knew it.

Never again would popes or emperors rule entire civilizations. That would be left to Kings or Lords ruling smaller nations and ethnic groups.

Radicals and Reformers

The Holy Spirit is always working, reviving, reforming, reminding.....remember Jesus and his teachings...

John Wycliffe, a philosophy professor at Oxford, England, went back to the New Testament to understand what the church really should be. He saw that the Church should not be built on Popes, priests or sacraments, but is about every person called by God to Jesus Christ. How could they live a Godly life and know they had faith in Christ?

By reading and understanding the Bible in their own language. Christ taught in the common language of his time, why not do the same? And so he set out to translate the Bible into English but died in 1384, requiring his followers to finish his work.

Meanwhile across Europe in Prague, another professor, **Jan Hus**, embraced Wycliffe's ideas claiming people should obey the church only when the church agreed with the Bible. In 1415, he was burned at the stake for his words.



In 1453, Constantinople finally fell to the Ottoman Turks and Islam became their official religion. Constantine's Eastern Empire was now gone. Hundreds of Eastern Scholars fled to the west taking with them ancient Greek manuscripts, sparking a Renaissance of interest in ancient Greek art, writing and thinking. Christians were inspired to study the original texts of the Bible to discover the original intent.

Also in 1453, **Johann Gutenberg** invented the first movable type printing press and for the first time printers could mass produce books. Bibles were printed and distributed and people could read for themselves and discovered how far the church had strayed from Jesus Great Commission. Once again the Spirit had helped people find their way back to the Bible.

But the Roman Church still ignored Scripture, seeking more power through selling indulgences, supporting artisans, and persecuting Muslims, Jews, enemies and heretics through the Spanish Inquisition. Tradition had replaced and displaced the Scriptures as the Church's Supreme authority.

It was once again time for reform and with reform comes division. The Church would never be the same. Below are a list of those who turned the world upside down.

- **Martin Luther**, 1517, Germany: Challenged the Churches selling of indulgences with his 95 Theses – Reaffirmed the righteous shall only live by grace through faith.
- **Ulrich Zwingli**, Switzerland, 1528: Believed communion elements were symbolic of Jesus body and blood, not real.
- **John Calvin**, France/Switzerland, 1536: Strong God-centered theology with great emphasis on sovereignty of God.

- **Anabaptists**, Felix Manz, Switzerland, 1524: Criticized practice of infant baptism and encouraged Believer's Baptism instead. Also believed no government should enforce theological truth.
- **William Tyndale**, England/Germany, 1526: Translated Greek New Testament in English
- **King Henry VIII**, England, 1533: Broke with the Roman Church, established Church of England, and approved use of Tyndale's Bible.

The Holy Spirit was on the move once again. People had a renewed awareness of the Sovereignty of God and what it meant to have a relationship with God by grace through faith.

Fast Forward

The Renaissance, the Age of Enlightenment and Discovery, New Worlds, Revolutions, Wars, Slavery, Industrial Revolution, Colonialism, Progress, Modernity, Development, Power, Cold War, Communism, Information Age, Globalization.....

No matter where or when, who or what, **the Church is still here and will be forever**. The Cycles of Revival, Renewal, Reform, Division, Change, Acceptance, Power, Control, Revival.....continues

God raises up new leaders, separates out a remnant, provides a fresh dose of the Spirit to purify his people, fulfill His Great Commission, and bring us back to Jesus and the Bible.

Leaders like John Wesley, Charles Spurgeon, Dwight L. Moody, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, C.S. Lewis, William Carey, Billy Graham, Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa, to name a few.

He uses persecution, scatters us through war, disaster, economic opportunities, or exile. He provides Keepers of the Faith, preachers, writers, students, thinkers, martyrs, heroes, servants, leaders, warriors, all focused on the eternal task at hand.

Any time, any culture, any language, any problem, anywhere, the Church survives. Directed by the Spirit, we find our way back to the Bible and Jesus. And where no man can conceivably go, Jesus goes Himself, speaking through dreams and visions.

Resources:

Church History is as intricate and vast as World History. Below are a few books recommended for the novice. Additional information can be found online.

[Exploring Church History](#) by James P. Eckman, Crossway Books, 2002.

[Christian History Made Easy](#) by Timothy Paul Jones, PhD, Rose Publishing, 2011

[Church History in Plain Language](#) by Bruce Shelley, Thomas Nelson, 1995.

Nothing New Under the Sun

The Church is alive and well and flourishing around the world. The Bible has been translated

into almost every written language, and progress is being made with many unwritten tribal languages. Christians in countries that are experiencing great persecution are also experiencing great revival. Believers are still willing to die for their faith instead of denying Christ.

The Great Commission appears to almost be completed. And yet churches are closing, major denominations are losing members, and moral failure and corruption amongst church leaders happens too often. Secularism creeps in as culture and majority rule sow confusion and division.

People are flocking to mega churches with celebrity pastors. Others seek out smaller house churches, where they rely on the Holy Spirit to teach them. Churches meet in strip malls and schools, online and in coffee houses, some build incredible campuses, while others start new churches in jungle villages. **And the Spirit leads all to be the Salt of the Earth and shine the Light of the World.**

Modern day heresy or wrong thinking still exists. Similar to the heresy of the early church, with a modern angle or so, the best way to stand against it is to have a church full of Christians growing in the knowledge of Christ.

Christian population growth is shifting from Europe and North America toward Asia, Africa, and South America. In a world where information is wealth, state and/or society based persecution is rising both from a growing religious intolerance in a world with a wide variety of ideologies and from Communist, national security, religious nationalist and Muslim majority states.

Jesus said He will build His Church and the Gates of Hell will not stand against it. Because that is still true today we still need the Spirit's constant reminders drawing us back to:

- The Son of God
- The Grace of God
- Our Need for God
- The City of God

And so we continue our fight against power and corruption within and without, making use of progress for His Glory and the good of all mankind.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:1-3 NIV

Your turn:

1. What criteria do you life with or to belong



use to choose a church to share or join?

2. What would cause you to stop going to church or to change churches?

3. In the Book of Revelation, the Apostle John sends messages of encouragement and rebuke to seven churches he had deep relationship with. Read **Revelation 2 and 3** and share what you discover about each church. How do these same issues manifest themselves in church life today?

Church at Ephesus:

Church at Smyrna:

Church at Pergamum:

Church at Thyatira:

Church at Sardis:

Church at Philadelphia:

Church at Laodicea:

journal

10.7 Nitty Gritty



1. **Love comes from God.** Without Him, there would be no love at all.
2. **No love, no God. Know love, Know God.**
3. **God lives and loves in the Land of the Trinity,** each One loving the Other perfectly.
4. **Love always requires an object, a Beloved,** for which it provides and seeks pleasure.
5. **God's love – giving His Best so we can be our best.**
6. **God loves first.** His love initiates the personal relationship available to us with Him. His love is the most precious attribute to the human soul.
7. **Storge Love, or Affection,** is the humblest love for those not of our choosing, starting with our families.
8. **Philia Love, or Friendship,** is the least natural love and involves a relationship by choice where you do something together. It is also referred to as platonic or brotherly love.
9. **Eros, or Romantic Love,** is sexual love with a total fascination with the Beloved.
10. **Agape, or God's love,** is the unselfish, self-giving, outgoing love of God. Agape love is what sets Christianity apart from all other religions and pagan spiritual practices. As we practice Agape love we discover the pleasure comes from the loving and not from the satisfaction of the need.
11. **Human love is need love. God's love is gift love.**
12. **The only thing we can gift love to God** that he doesn't already have is ourselves.

closure

Because it matters what we think about God

We have come to the end of **To Die For**, the tenth of the 12 OmniInfinity™ Journeys. This journey has caused us to **Remember** "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him." and **Read** I Corinthians 12-13 and Ephesians 5-6.

We **Analyzed** by Color Coding *I Corinthians 13*; **Investigated** God's love; and **Practiced** Worship and Celebration. We took **Inventory** of our Relationships and went **Adventuring** to Bless another person. We were challenged in **More Cool Stuff** to learn more about the mystery and the history of Jesus' Bride, the Church, both in its local and universal forms. And finally, **Lyrics** spoke to our hearts and souls as we pondered through music the impact of God's Love on our lives.

The **Journal** revealed that **love begins and ends with God**. Without God as our model, we would not know love. It's his relational attribute and **requires a Beloved**. God lives and loves in the Land of the Trinity, where each One is loving each Other perfectly. Although this is hard for us to understand, this is the only way for God to be love as well as to give love perfectly.

He **initiates this relationship with us** by always loving first and then **jealously protects this love** relationship with the Beloved, giving His Best so we can be our Best. His love is binding, like a covenant, so we need not fear ever losing it. He is crazy about us, **crazy enough to die in our place**. His love is as perfect as it gets. We also learned there are four kinds of love: **Affection, Friendship, Romantic Love and God's agape or sacrificial Love**.

Our often **imperfect and needy human love** stands in contrast to God's Love. We play games and look to people to fill love needs that only God can fill. With broken hearts we run and hide, eventually reappearing to seek another counterfeit love.

We also look to fill our needs through others, even to the point of making our need loves into idols. But once the need is gone, the love disappears. Yet human love is held up as the panacea for everything. Love is all we need. **Love has become our god**.

We say we Love God, but only when we think we need Him. Then we think about Him. **The problem is our awareness of our need**. God, however, offers us His Godly Gift Love in place of our Human Need Love. **The pleasure is in the loving, not in the satisfaction of the need**. The only thing we can give God that He doesn't already have is ourselves. It's only when we love God and let Him love us, that we can truly begin to Love One Another.

Now it's time to **think back** over this part of your journey and **reflect** on what you have discovered and learned. The sections below may help jog your memory. **Describe** the details of any areas that **apply** to you.

New Things I Learned

Old Things I was reminded of

Questions I have

Areas I was challenged in

First steps I took

Areas I would like to study more

“AHA!” moments

Dreams and visions



appendix

- [About the Journeys](#)
- [About Remembering](#)
- [About the Practices](#)

about the journeys...

Welcome to **OmniInfinity™**.. a series of guided journeys leading to greater knowledge and understanding of the attributes of God and the Spiritual Practices necessary to gain this knowledge.

The only requirement is a willingness to learn and discover through a variety of activities. Some elements you may naturally be drawn to, some will challenge you, and some may be way out of the box for you. It is important to do them all, in order, completing one journey before moving on to the next.

There are twelve journeys or units, **each designed to be completed in two months** - either by yourself, with a friend or in a small group setting. It is important to remember we all start from different places, we start with what we know and move on from there, but we are all traveling together.

journey elements

The following elements make up each journey and should be completed in order. Some of the elements require some advance planning, so you might want to review the entire contents of each journey before you begin. Use the Table of Contents to check off your progress.

Remember: One or more Bible verses to memorize for each journey unit.

Read: Throughout the twelve journey units you will read some of the most profound and well loved chapters in the Bible.

Analyze: A variety of Bible Study methods will be offered to help you analyze in greater depth a section of the Reading above. The goal of this section is to familiarize you with various ways to greater understand God's Word.

Investigate and 10 things: Each journey unit focuses on a group of God's attributes, defining terms, and completing a directed investigation page.

Practice and Why?: Part of growing in our relationship with God is the intentional practice of skills that have helped Christians from the beginning. Each journey unit will focus on one or more of these with instructions for developing each discipline skill. Some Practices involve doing a specific activity, while others require we stop doing certain things.

Inventory: A personal inventory will be completed regarding areas related to the attributes and skills studied in each unit, reviewing your personal history and evaluating your current practices and beliefs.

Adventuring: This section guides you to venture out into the world with a specific assignment to observe, interact with or impact your surroundings and neighborhoods. The intent is to allow God to reveal Himself through nature, media and other people.

Lyrics: You are encouraged to read the included song lyrics as poetry for your inspiration, go online and listen to the actual recordings and then reflect on the questions that follow.

Journal and More Cool Stuff: The author has included some musings and further information pertaining to the subject of each journey unit for your consideration, personal response and reflection.

Closure: At the conclusion of each journey there is a place to recap where you've been, what you learned, new thoughts, challenges, growing pains.....

enjoy the adventure ...

about remembering...



Think of this exercise as a necessary foundation for future excellence – like practicing scales on the piano or doing wind sprints or swimming laps, taking your vitamins, or eating your vegetables.

We actually recall or remember all kinds of things we've memorized without really even trying. Can you think of any?

How about your phone number, email address, street address, zip code, social security number, birthday, names of your family, how to get to work, how to drive a car, that secret recipe...or how to spell or multiply, song lyrics, movie scenes, jokes, what someone was wearing, what car they drove, sports statistics, what chocolate tastes like, what the ocean smells like, and on and on.

Why do we remember what we remember?

Recollection is just the tip of the memory iceberg. Within our marvelous and mysterious brain the memory works in collaboration with us and the world – it uses all our senses and emotions. We associate smells, colors, places, rituals, symbols, landmarks, even people, with memories and when we sense the trigger, we remember.

There are tremendous spiritual benefits from Remembering Bible verses:

- Strengthens our faith
- Shapes how we view the world
- Makes God's Word immediately accessible
- Guards our minds.....and that's just for starters.

Experts say that we will forget more in the first hour after our memory event than in one day, and more in the first day than the first month...What we remember for one month, will probably stay with us.....so the idea is to remember regularly for one month and we've got it.

Here are some suggestions to help you get started. We all learn differently – so don't be afraid to try some of the more unusual methods. Not only do we need to remember the verse, **we need to remember to work on remembering the verse.**

- Write the verse on several post it notes or index cards and put them where you will see them such as the car, the bathroom mirror, the kitchen sink, a bulletin board, your computer screen saver, your cell phone, by your bed....
- Make plans to spend five minutes, twice a day (usually as you get up and before bed) to review.
- Say it slowly, 15 times in a row, emphasizing each word.
- If you have already learned it in another translation, review that one. Once you know it in one, look it up in a couple of other translations to see what is different.
- Review it when you are waiting in line, or on hold on the phone.
- Sing it – make up a tune to go with it
- For extra credit, add the verse before and the verse after.

about the practices...

The Spiritual Practices put us in a place where we are better able to interact with our environment and God. God can then reach inside our spirits and transform them.

Just as our body needs to eat, breathe, exercise, drink, sleep, etc., so our spiritual self needs to make sure it is being sustained, cared for, and trained.

The results include spiritual growth, a life controlled by the Holy Spirit, evidence of the fruit of the spirit, and the ultimate goal, living life like Jesus did.

The Spiritual Practices are not:

- Meritorious laws that earn favor with God
- A way to show how spiritually mature we are
- Unpleasant or difficult

Instead, they are:

- Intentional
- Activities we do that when practiced allow us to do activities we cannot now do.
- Adaptable to work with our temperaments and gifts
- Adjustable according to the rhythm and seasons of our lives

There are two kinds

Practices of Abstinence - when we stop doing something that is perfectly normal to allow ourselves to focus more on God, His Word, and growing in godliness. These also help us resist our tendency toward sins of commission (when we do something we shouldn't do). We withdraw to breathe in all that God can provide to us, breaking the hold that the world has on our lives. Practices of Abstinence help ready us and create room for the Practices of Engagement.

Practices of Engagement - when we do certain activities that help us grow in Christ and obey his commandments. The Practices of Abstinence have opened up the time and broken up the preoccupations so we are now free to learn of, focus on, and practice those things that God commands us to do. These assist in keeping us from our tendency toward sins of omission (not doing the things we should do). We engage to breathe out all that God commands us. ¹¹

As their name implies, the Spiritual Practices are not one-time events, but skills to be learned and developed over time. So don't be discouraged in the beginning if you struggle with them or find them difficult. Make them a regular part of your life. In our Journeys we would rather **emphasize the actual practicing of the Practices** and not so much the reading about them.....and let you discover the benefits as they appear in your life.

credits

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so what now?

Continue your OmniInfinity™ adventure with

- Journey Eleven: Up Close & Personal**

- Journey Twelve: Perfect Ending**