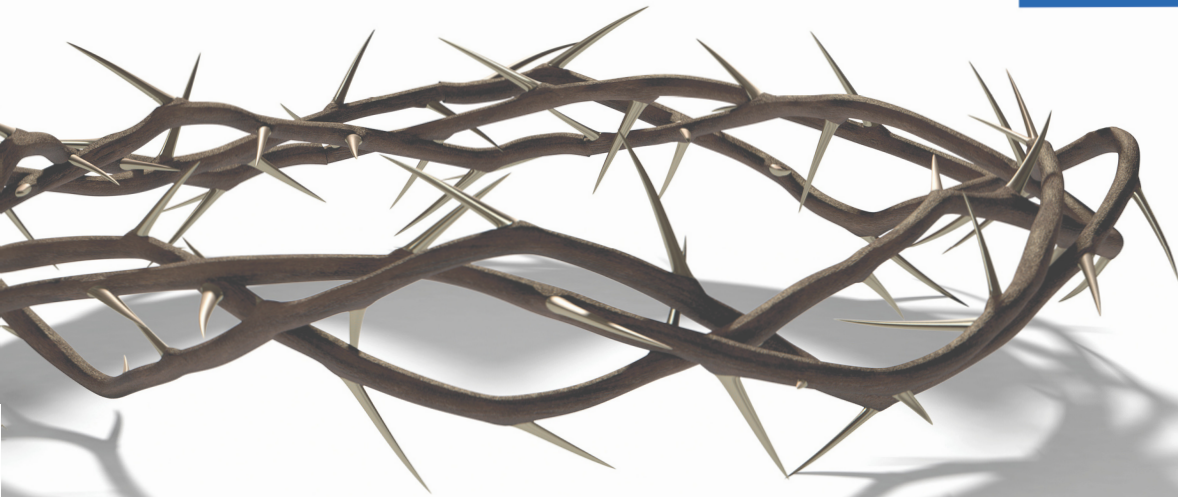


CORE CLASS

THE
GOSPEL



The Gospel

Syllabus

Fall, 2018
v. 1.0

PRE-WORK	Keller Introduction, Chandler Introduction
WEEK 1 <i>Homework</i>	Overview, Keller Intro, and Chandler Intro <i>Chandler Chapters 1 & 5</i>
WEEK 2 <i>Homework</i>	God Creates All Things, Chandler 1 & 5 <i>Chandler Chapters 2 & 6</i>
WEEK 3 <i>Homework</i>	God Creates Man and Woman <i>Chandler Chapter 3</i>
WEEK 4 <i>Homework</i>	Sin Breaks <i>Chandler Chapter 4</i>
WEEK 5 <i>Homework</i>	Chandler Chapters 2, 6, 3, & 4 <i>Summarize verses used in 'Jesus Saves' study</i>
WEEK 6 <i>Homework</i>	Jesus Saves <i>Keller Chapter 1, Chandler Chapter 7</i>
WEEK 7 <i>Homework</i>	Jesus Transforms, Keller Chapter 1 <i>Keller Chapters 2 & 3</i>
WEEK 8 <i>Homework</i>	Jesus Transforms, Keller Chapter 2 <i>Keller Chapter 4, Chandler Chapter 8</i>
WEEK 9 <i>Homework</i>	God Restores, Keller Chapter 3 <i>Keller Chapters 5 & 6</i>
WEEK 10	Keller Chapters 4, 5, & 6

Books

Chandler, Matt. *The Explicit Gospel*, Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

Keller, Timothy. *Shaped by the Gospel*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016.



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The Gospel: Overview

We desire everyone at Bible Center to understand and receive the Gospel, apply the Gospel to their lives and relationships, and communicate this Good News to others.

Brief Definition

The Gospel is the Good News of God's redemptive plan to create, save, transform, and restore his people and world through the work of Christ to the glory of God.

The Gospel in 10 Words

We want our 5-year-olds, 95-year-olds, and everyone in between to be able to easily understand and communicate the Gospel.

GOD CREATES

SIN BREAKS

JESUS SAVES

JESUS TRANSFORMS

GOD RESTORES

Expanded Definition

The heart of the Gospel is the creating and saving work of Christ applied to the individual, the church, and the world to the glory of God. The Good News of the Gospel is the story of God's redeeming work planned from eternity, accomplished through Christ in human history, and fully realized at the end of the age.

Frequent Misconceptions About the Gospel



The message of the Gospel is referenced as a message heard and believed at a point in our past and is only applicable in our salvation.



The Gospel is treated as rudimentary and additional teachings are necessary for maturity and spiritual growth.



The Gospel message and the work of Christ only pertains to individuals and their salvation.

Right Perspectives on the Gospel



The Gospel declares our right standing before God and invites us into a life of experiencing God's love, fellowship with God, and living in right relationships with one another.



The Gospel centers us on the finished work of Christ and leads us away from moralism, self-righteousness, and self-justification or a drifting toward indifferent sinfulness and presents a life of repentance and faith growing ever deeper in our fellowship with God.



The Gospel has past, present, and future connotations, shaping the individual, renewing the church, and restoring his world.

*Write your notes
in the margins!*



The Gospel: Brief Definition

The Gospel is the Good News of God's redemptive plan to create, save, transform, and restore his people and world through the work of Christ to the glory of God.

The Gospel: 10-Word Definition

GOD CREATES

God created all things, man and woman were made in his holy image and relational nature.

SIN BREAKS

Man sins, cursing creation and breaking his relationship with both God and others.

JESUS SAVES

Jesus, died on the cross in our place, raised from the dead, and offers forgiveness by grace through faith.

JESUS TRANSFORMS

We grow together as a family, in the Gospel, while living on mission.

GOD RESTORES

God makes all things new, the redeemed saint, a glorious bride, and a renewed creation.

The Gospel: Expanded Explanation

The heart of the Gospel is the creating and saving work of Christ applied to the individual, the church, and the world to the glory of God. The Good News of the Gospel is the story of God's redeeming work planned from eternity, accomplished through Christ in human history, and fully realized at the end of the age. We desire everyone at Bible Center to understand and receive the Gospel, apply the Gospel to their lives and relationships, and communicate this Good News to others.

GOD CREATES

In perfect unity and eternal fellowship, the triune God created out of the abundance of his love. By the power of his word, he spoke matter, space, and time into being. Creation climaxes as God creates man and woman in his own holy image and relational nature. All of creation brings glory to God as it reflects his holiness, beauty, and nature.

SIN BREAKS

Though created in holiness, man chooses to sin and rebel against God. Adam and Eve rule and represent creation, through their sin, all of creation is broken, cursed, and fallen. Death now reigns. Humanity's relationship with God and with one another is broken beyond human repair. Sin and suffering taint and consume all of creation.

JESUS SAVES

God's Plan God, knowing man would fall, points to a coming Savior who will save man from his sin. God now displays his glory through the progressive revelation of his character and redemptive plan to save his people and his world from the devastation of sin. All of the Old Testament (narrative, poetry, and prophecy) point to a coming Messiah! Through a chosen people, God works out his plan as Jesus, the Son of God, is born.

Christ's Work The centerpiece of the Gospel's good news is Jesus and the work of the cross! Jesus, comes as our prophet, priest, and king, to live the life we should have lived and to die the death we should have died. In our place, through his death on the cross, Jesus bears the full wrath of God against our sin. On the third day, he raises from the dead, conquering sin and death.

Our Benefit Forgiveness, pardon, and grace are offered to all who repent and believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord. Everyone

who believes, begins an unbreakable eternal relationship with God, receiving full acceptance and access to the Lord as beloved children identified with Christ Himself – holy and blameless. We are motivated by grace and compelled by his love to live a life of worship and obedience.

JESUS TRANSFORMS

God's Family Christians are adopted into God's family to live life together in and through the church. Growth takes place in community centered around the Word. The Holy Spirit works in and through the church to provide direction, discipleship, and community for God's people. Maturity and growth take place as each member of the family lives a life of love and service, giving grace and truth, on mission, sharing this Gospel message to others.

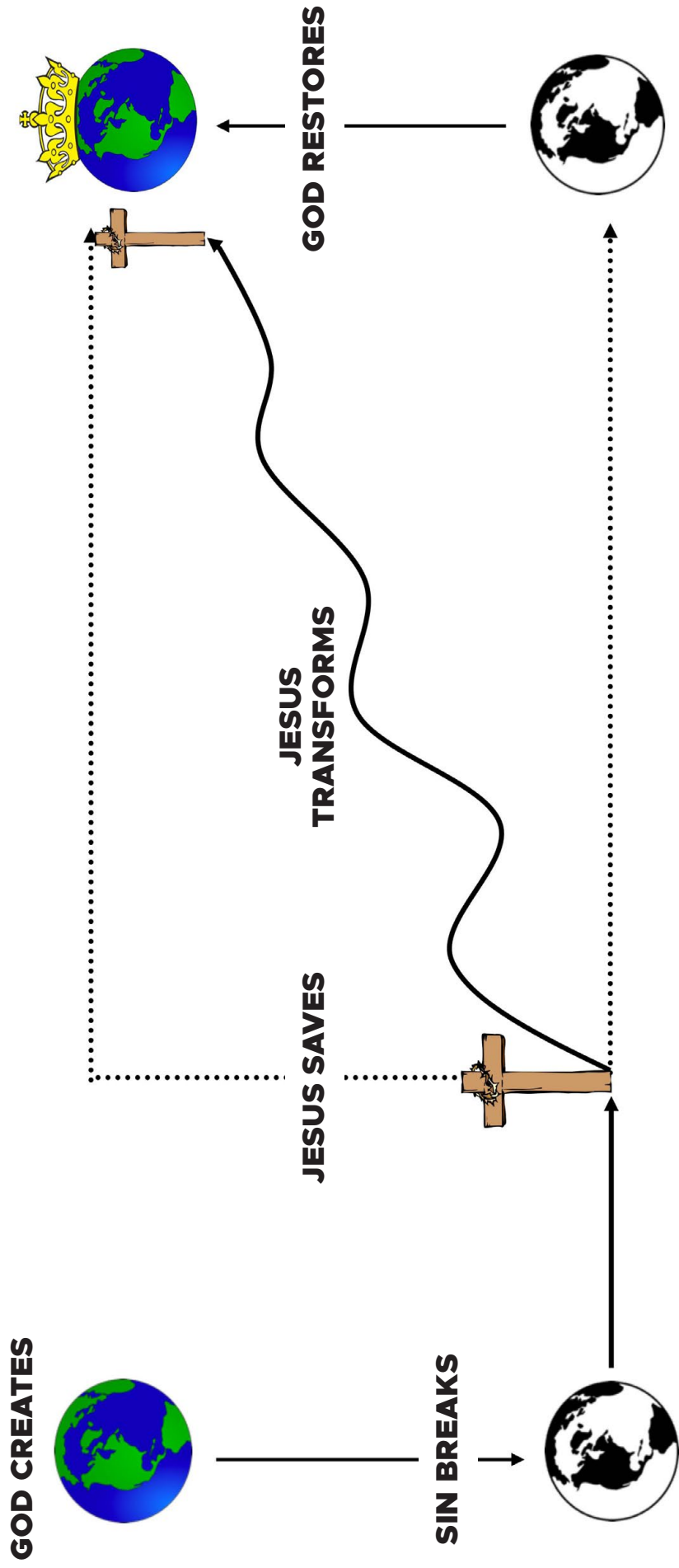
Gospel Growth The message of the Gospel saves us and grows us. An ever-increasing understanding of God's holiness and our sin (through God's Word, God's people and God's Spirit), draws us to the cross in repentance and faith. A deepening understanding of Jesus' work on our behalf increases our love, joy, gratitude, and fellowship with God becoming more like Christ. Jesus and the finished work of the cross becomes ever-more beautiful and amazing as we fall more in love with Him. The Gospel grows us by leading us to a Christ-centered life of increasing dependence, worship, love, and service, leading us away from moralism or performance to find acceptance before God. Only in the Gospel do we have hope in a world of sin and suffering. The Gospel transforms our hearts, grows his church, and is at work in his world.

On Mission The Gospel is always growing deeper and wider as it penetrates into the hearts of believers and extends out to those who have yet to know the love of Christ. In thankfulness and joy, we are quick to give love and grace to others. The Gospel puts the church on mission in our circles of influence, in our city, and in our world to grow God's kingdom on earth as more hearts live under the rule and reign of Christ.

GOD RESTORES

All things are made new! In the final chapter, God faithfully completes his redemptive plan. Through the work of Christ, all of creation will be restored, renewed, and reconciled to Him. God is presently at work in our hearts and in his universe, pointing to the day when all things will be made new. God's redemptive plan will culminate in a redeemed people living with Him in a new heaven and a new earth – a holy and restored creation that will worship and enjoy its Creator forever!

The Gospel



GOD CREATES

God created all things, man and woman were made in his holy image and relational nature.

In perfect unity and eternal fellowship, the triune God created out of the abundance of his love. By the power of his word, he spoke matter, space, and time into being. Creation climaxes as God creates man and woman in his own holy image and relational nature. All of creation brings glory to God as it reflects his holiness, beauty, and nature.

1. An All-Mighty Creator

“In the beginning, God...”

– GENESIS 1:1

Before anything was created...God. What do we know to be true of God's nature before He even created a single atom? He is...

Eternal – Time was created by God and He is not bound by time in any way. He resides outside of time and sees all of it at once. Before the creation of time, God resided in His eternal state. Our human minds can't fully comprehend what this even means, all we know and experience is measured and bound by time.

Why is it important to remember God's words in Isaiah 55:8-9 as we discuss the greatness and nature of God?

Triune – God is three in one. Three persons co-eternal, distinct, and yet one. God by nature is relational; Father, Son and Holy Spirit enjoying one another in perfect harmony, lacking nothing, unified, and abounding in love from before time began.

Why is it important to realize that God created out of abundance rather than out of some need?

What do we learn about God from Acts 17:24-26?

Unchanging (Immutable) – His attributes, qualities, and moral nature exist in perfect unity within the triune God, never compromising, adjusting, or correcting to fix a flaw or a flutter of perceived weakness or need. (Malachi 3:6, James 1:17, Hebrews 13:8)

Why would God never need to change, progress, or advance?

Omni-present – God is everywhere always! He transcends his creation, yet also chooses to be present and personally involved within his creation.

How should these aspects of God's nature effect our daily struggles and responsibilities?

"In the beginning, God..."

– GENESIS 1:1

To create all things God must be...

All-Powerful (Omnipotent) – From the most distant star to the inner-workings of each and every atom, God has created and maintains all of his creation by simply speaking it into being. Nothing escapes his intentionality and purpose.

In all of man's attempts to create a comic book or big screen super hero, none can compare to the actual power of God. It is beyond human reason and comprehension. In thousands of years of history, science, and study, we still can't understand or explain all that has been made or comprehend the fact that it was made out of nothing simply by the power of the spoken word of our God.

All-knowing and All-wise (Omniscient) – How would our hearts and minds change if we truly believed that God was both all-wise and all-powerful?

2. God Creates the World

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

– GENESIS 1:1

- *Beginning* God creates time
- *Heavens* God creates space
- *Earth* God creates matter



He is the Creator and master of all time, space, and matter.

God creates light, heavenly hosts, water, land, all life, and our measurements of time; day and night.

“And God saw that it was good.”

– GENESIS 1:25

What is the significance of God Himself proclaiming creation to be “good”? What does this teach us about his character?

Colossians 1:15-17 What role does the Jesus; the Son of God play in creation?

Genesis 1:2 Who was also present during creation?

It is beyond our reach to understand the inter-workings of the Trinity in the creation of all things, but it is important for us to observe that all three persons of the Trinity are active and engaged in creation. Some have attempted to understand it by theorizing that the Father acted as the architect, Jesus the builder, and the Holy Spirit as the interior designer. In what ways do we see all persons of the Trinity working together in the timeline of Scripture?

3. God Creates Man and Woman (in His Image and Relational Nature)

“The entire world is a revelation of God, a mirror of his virtues and perfections; every creature is in his own way and according to his own measure an embodiment of a divine thought. But among all creatures only man is the image of God, the highest and richest revelation of God, and therefore head and crown of the entire creation.”

– HERMAN BAVINCK

Genesis 1:26-30 – What do we learn about the nature of man and woman?

What do we learn about the role and purpose of man?

What kind of relationship does man have with the rest of God’s creation?

Genesis 1:31 – “God saw all that he made, and it was very good.” What does this tell us about man’s moral nature?

Genesis 2:7 – How did God create man? In what way was man connected to the physical creation and in what way does he reflect God’s spiritual nature?

A. **Created in His Image** In what ways do we reflect the nature of God?

1. **Moral Nature** We were created to share in his holiness. After the fall, we continue to share in an understanding of good and evil and have the ability to make moral choices.
2. **Relational Nature** How do we reflect God’s relational nature? How does this reality get played out in the church?
3. **Rational Nature** We are cognitive and can think, process, and analyze. How do we reflect God’s nature in this way and yet at the same time come up short in our ability to do it fully like Him? Why is it important for us to remember our

limits? How do we balance our limitations and responsibility to learn and pursue God with our mind?

In our pursuit of God, He can be truly known yet not fully known. We can see his hand at work all around us, but yet we don't understand all of the hows and whys. Even in Scripture, there are many truths that are difficult to understand and will not be fully understood until we see Him face to face. In humility, we seek, we read, and we pursue God trusting his wisdom over our own.

4. **Spiritual Nature / Embodied Souls** Why is it so important that we have a spiritual nature?

Explain this statement: We are embodied souls—our soul is presently interdependent with our body.

What is the danger of viewing our physical body as unimportant?

How might God's call and design for man to work, play a role in man reflecting God's nature?

Our body is considered the temple of the Holy Spirit. Jesus took on a fully human body (He knew this would happen when he designed, created, and fashioned the human body), and fed it, rested it, and ministered with and through it the entirety of his life.

5. **Emotional Nature** Often emotions are viewed as unimportant or even useless in our pursuit of holiness. Jesus is clear that emotions—love in particular—is the actual basis for measuring spiritual maturity and growth (Mark 12:30 & 1 Corinthians 13). It is love that moves the body and person into action (John 14:15, 2 Corinthians 5:14).

What happens when we devalue emotions?

What is the benefit of recognizing and discussing negative emotions (fear, guilt & shame)? We bear God's likeness, yet we are not God. Which attributes of His do we reflect (or should reflect) and what aspects of his nature do we not reflect?

4. Created in His Relational Nature

Genesis 2:15-18 We know from Genesis 1:27 that man and woman were equally created in the image of God. In the Genesis 2 account of the creation of man and woman, we see **distinction, interdependence, and similarity** for the sake of genuine **union** between the man and woman.

Distinction – in Role (Genesis 2:15-17) and in Creation (Genesis 2:19-22)

- Adam (before Eve was created) was given the direct assignment to work and keep the garden (2:15).
- Adam was also given a direct command to not eat the forbidden fruit (2:17).
- Man - There was a uniqueness in the creation of man in that it was a combination of the dust of the ground and the breath of the Lord. Perhaps with some unique implication of man's relationship to creation (distinctly called to name the animals, keep and tend the garden (2:15), and even name woman (2:23)).
- Woman – She is created by God using the rib of the man. Perhaps showing some unique implications in her relationship to man (distinctly created and called to come along side man in his duties, bear children, and to relieve his loneliness).

Interdependence

- Here is the only “not good” in the creation account – man should not be alone (1:18)!
- It must be understood that man was deficient without woman. He was left lacking. His lack may be in relation to his inability to fulfill his role alone, but his lack is certainly seen in his loneliness.
- **“Helper”** is a Hebrew word often used to describe a divine assistant or a military aid (Isaiah 30:5, Ezekiel 12:14, Hosea 13:9). In no sense does this term give the woman a role that is of less worth than man – they work together in their God-given roles.
- **“Suitable for him”** or “matching him” – expresses mutual support and companionship, expressing interdependence while each fulfills their distinct role.

Similarity Genesis 2:23

Adam immediately recognizes Eve as “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”.

Union Genesis 2:24-25

All others fall by the wayside in comparison to the commitment, connection, and union of a husband and a wife in the “one flesh” relationship.

What happens if a man or woman stays overly connected to their family of origin instead of to their spouse? What are the potential consequences?

Adam and Eve were naked with no shame. They enjoyed a relationship designed by God—fully open, honest, and authentic without guilt, fear, or shame. This was God’s original design for our relationships. In a world without sin, we have nothing to hide.

How does this distinction, similarity, and union reflect the Trinity?

How do we see roles and distinction played out in the Trinity? Do roles or submission (Son to the Father) equate to a decreased value of any person of the Trinity?

What happens if we elevate the worth of the man’s or the woman’s role above the other?

After the Fall, does man lose God’s image? In what ways “yes” and in what ways “no?”

Genesis 9:6 teaches us what about this topic?

John Calvin agrees that we maintain some of God’s image, but Calvin calls us “frightfully deformed.”

“According to the Bible, man does not just bear or have the image of God but is the image of God, and that the image of God extends to man in his entirety. All this implies that the image of God is not something accidental to man, which he can lose without ceasing to be man, but is essential to his existence.”

– HERMAN BAVINCK

SIN BREAKS

Man sins, cursing creation and breaking his relationship with both God and others.

Though created in holiness, man chooses to sin and rebel against God. Adam and Eve rule and represent creation, through their sin, all of creation is broken, cursed, and fallen. Death now reigns. Humanity's relationship with God and with one another is broken beyond human repair. Sin and suffering taint and consume all of creation.

1. Sin Breaks Creation Itself

The serpent tempted Eve to doubt God's word, goodness, and love for them. Eve fell to temptation, ate the fruit, and Adam joined her also eating from the tree of good and evil and disobeying God. Adam was taken from the ground, named all living things, and tended the garden. The consequences of his sin were passed on to all that he oversaw.

This broken world now has famines, drought, natural disasters, disease, and the peace that existed among all living things has now turned to competition and death in every ecosystem.

VERY GOOD



The Fall



VERY BROKEN



“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.”

– GENESIS 3:17-19

What does “painful toil” look like day to day?

Work was a gift from God; a part of his holy world, now “thorns and thistles.” There are literal thorns and thistles, but included is the sense that our work is now a fallen aspect of our life. How do we see this in the office, on the assembly line, or in any place of work?

However, there is a reflection of God’s beauty in this brokenness. Summarize each verse:

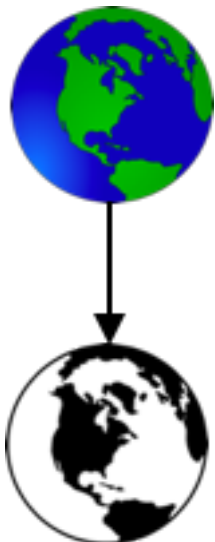
Romans 1:20

Psalm 19:1

Romans 8:22-24

2. Sin breaks our relationship with God

Adam and Eve immediately recognize that they have been exposed. They hide from each other and they hide from God. God pursues them! The Lord immediately provides garments to clothe them. Consequences are dealt and they still reverberate today. Spiritual death and physical death are introduced into the now fallen creation. Man, through sin, has broken his relationship with God. And only God can repair what has been broken!



Depravity of Man

CORINTHIANS 1:18



What do we learn about our sin from each verse?

Ephesians 2:1-3

Romans 3:10-12

Romans 3:23

Jeremiah 17:9

What are God's Expectations of man in each verse?

1 Corinthians 10:31

Colossians 3:17

Romans 14:23

James 4:17

After the fall, there is no innate goodness within us. Everything is tainted by sin. Our most "righteous deeds" are as filthy rags to God (Isaiah 64:6). In spiritual deadness, we live in rebellion to God. Nothing inside of us seeks after God.

How does understanding the spiritual state and condition of your friends, neighbors, and coworkers who do not know Christ influence your perspective on outreach?

3. Sin breaks our relationships with one another (and even with ourselves)

Genesis 2:15 / Genesis 3:7 Within moments after sinning, Adam and Eve's relationships completely change from full freedom and openness to shame, fear, and guilt.

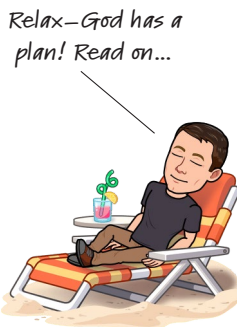
Before the fall they were able to openly share with one another relationally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Openness turned into hiding. Freedom turned into fear.

Trust turned into mistrust. And communion turned into isolation.

Even now, our relationships are marred by our sin and the sins done to us:

- A. **Shame** distorts, informs, and shapes our view of ourselves. Shame demands to stay hidden, or others may know how terrible and repulsive we truly are. We search to find approval through self-serving shallow relationships protecting our 'true selves' from discovery.
- B. **Guilt** keeps us closed off, and we use blame, sarcasm, and our defense mechanisms to protect ourselves – undermining our relationships. We find false saviors, outside of Christ, to try to remedy our internal sickness and sin.
- C. **Fear** of rejection, pain, and isolation can keep us performing before God and others trying to make us seem confident, desirable, lovable, and secure. We can move toward co-dependence or distance while trying to find solace and security either through another or from behind a wall of protection.

Our favorite memories and our deepest wounds are usually associated with relationships. What are some examples of how sin has broken our relationships with one another?



What kind of broken relationships are destroying our city?

How can we as individuals and groups become more practically engaged in real relationships within our neighborhoods, places of work, and schools?

Genesis 3:15 Even moments after the fall, the Lord announces that there is one (the Seed) who is coming who will crush the enemy and one day bless all nations (Genesis 12:1). Not for a moment does God leave his people without hope and an opportunity for faith in God's character and promises.

JESUS SAVES

Jesus, died on the cross in our place, raised from the dead, and offers forgiveness by grace through faith.

1. God's Plan

God, knowing man would fall, points to a coming Savior who will save man from his sin. God now displays his glory through the progressive revelation of his character and redemptive plan to save his people and his world from the devastation of sin. All of the Old Testament (narrative, poetry, and prophecy) point to a coming Messiah! Through a chosen people, God works out his plan as Jesus, the Son of God, is born.

IMPORTANT 2

**All of the Old Testament
points to the coming Messiah!**



“Now He said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’”

– LUKE 24:44

A. **God's nature** is revealed throughout the Old Testament.

- He is holy and He both expects and demands holiness from mankind.
- He is patient, merciful, and gracious enduring man's sin, idolatry, and rebellion for thousands of years.
- God continues to provide man additional help (law, sacrificial system, festivals...) to turn from evil and follow Him.
- The Lord promises that one day He himself will remedy the situation.

B. **The all-encompassing, *sinful nature* of man is revealed.**

- The Law, a Promised Land, a Chosen People, patriarchs, prophets, a sacrificial system, the tabernacle, the temple, kings, miracles, great victories, and even the active work of God does not make man acceptable to God.
- Nothing curbs or cures his propensity and love of evil, wickedness, and idolatry.

C. ***God's plan* is announced and promised through covenants with Adam, Abraham, David, and others.**

- God's plan is for one to come through whom all nations could be blessed (Genesis 3:15, 12:1-3).
- This Messiah would come through the nation of Israel for the sake of the world (Isaiah 53:4-6; 11:10).
- The Psalms sing of a coming Messiah (Psalms 22) and his global mission (Psalms 67).

2. Christ's Work

The centerpiece of the Gospel's good news is Jesus and the work on the cross! Jesus comes as our prophet, priest, and king to live the life we should have lived and to die the death we should have died. In our place, through his death on the cross, Jesus bears the full wrath of God against our sin. On the third day, he raises from the dead, conquering sin and death.

- Jesus, the Son of God, is born with a fully human body. He is fully God and fully man.
- Jesus lives a sinless life in the power of the Spirit to the glory of the Father.
- Jesus is the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies and promises concerning the plan of God; the coming Messiah.
- On the cross Jesus stands in our place as a substitute bearing the wrath of God in our place.
- Jesus raises from the dead on the third day and shares the Good News to his disciples.

How is the holiness, justice, love, and goodness of God all demonstrated in the cross?

Acts 17:26-31 Who is invited to believe this message?

3. Our Benefit

Forgiveness, pardon, and grace are offered to all who repent and believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord. Everyone who believes, begins an unbreakable eternal relationship with God, receiving full acceptance and access to the Lord as beloved children identified with Christ Himself—holy and blameless. We are motivated by grace and compelled by his love to live a life of worship and obedience. Describe the nature of some of these benefits according to:

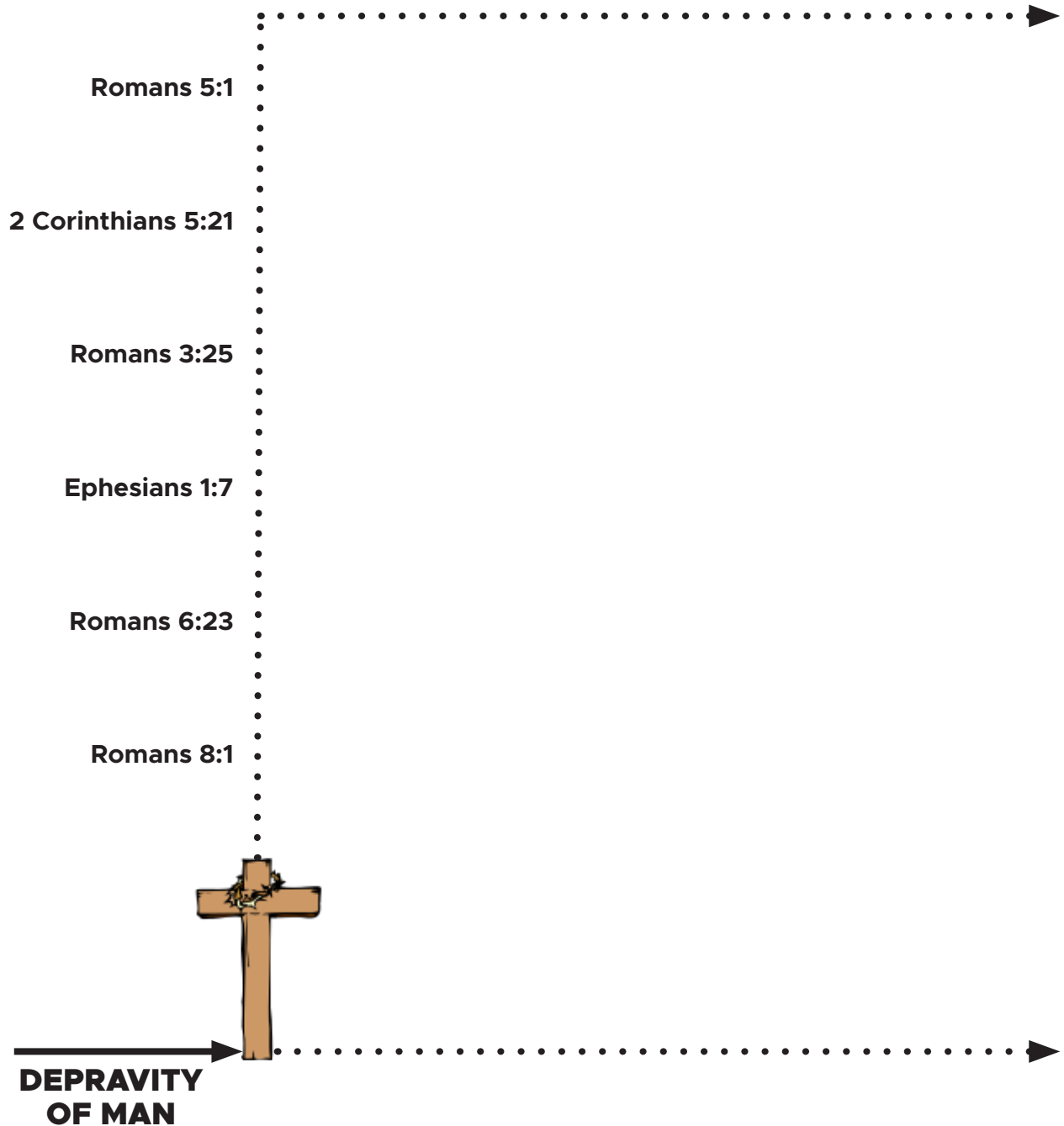
Ephesians 2:8-9

Romans 10:9

John 1:12

Identity in Christ

The moment we believe, many things happen and become true of us. We are identified with and found in Christ. This new position in Christ is the basis for our identity, our relationships, and our purpose. In the blank area, describe some of these characteristics according to the verse on the left.



Everything about us changes the moment we believe:

- **2 Corinthians 5:17** – A New Person
- **Ephesians 1:5** – A New Relationship
- **Ephesians 1:13** – A New Resident

Our identity in Christ is unchanging! This is a permanent change based upon the completed work of Christ. What happens if we allow life experiences, thoughts, the words of others, or feelings to dictate and shape our identity instead of Christ?

Romans 5:8 Why is it important for us to keep our eyes on the cross? What can happen if we forget all that Christ has accomplished for us on the cross?

What happens to people who don't understand (or forget) their identity in Christ? How do we remember, and help those around us to remember, that our identity is in Christ alone?

What happens when we begin to form our identity around our success, relationships, good works, neighborhood, career, or families instead of Christ?

JESUS TRANSFORMS

*We grow together as a family,
in the Gospel, while living on mission.*

1. God's Family

Christians are adopted into God's family to live life together in and through the church. Growth takes place in community centered around the Word. The Holy Spirit works in and through the church to provide direction, discipleship, and community for God's people. Maturity and growth take place as each member of the family lives a life of love and service, giving grace and truth, on mission, sharing this Gospel message to others.

Ephesians 4:1-2 How are we to treat one another?

Ephesians 4:3-6 What do we share in common?

Ephesians 4:11-16 Why has God given us different roles and gifts in the body?

Who is called to actually "do the work of the ministry"?

How are we to speak to one another?

What are some of the struggles that arise from the divine differences that we have been given?

How can we make sure that we, and those around us, are properly working according to our part / role in the body for the building up of the whole?

Hebrews 3:12-13 What role do we play in one another's lives for spiritual growth?

How must a church set itself up in order to live out all of these verses discussed above? What will happen if a church does not take small groups seriously?

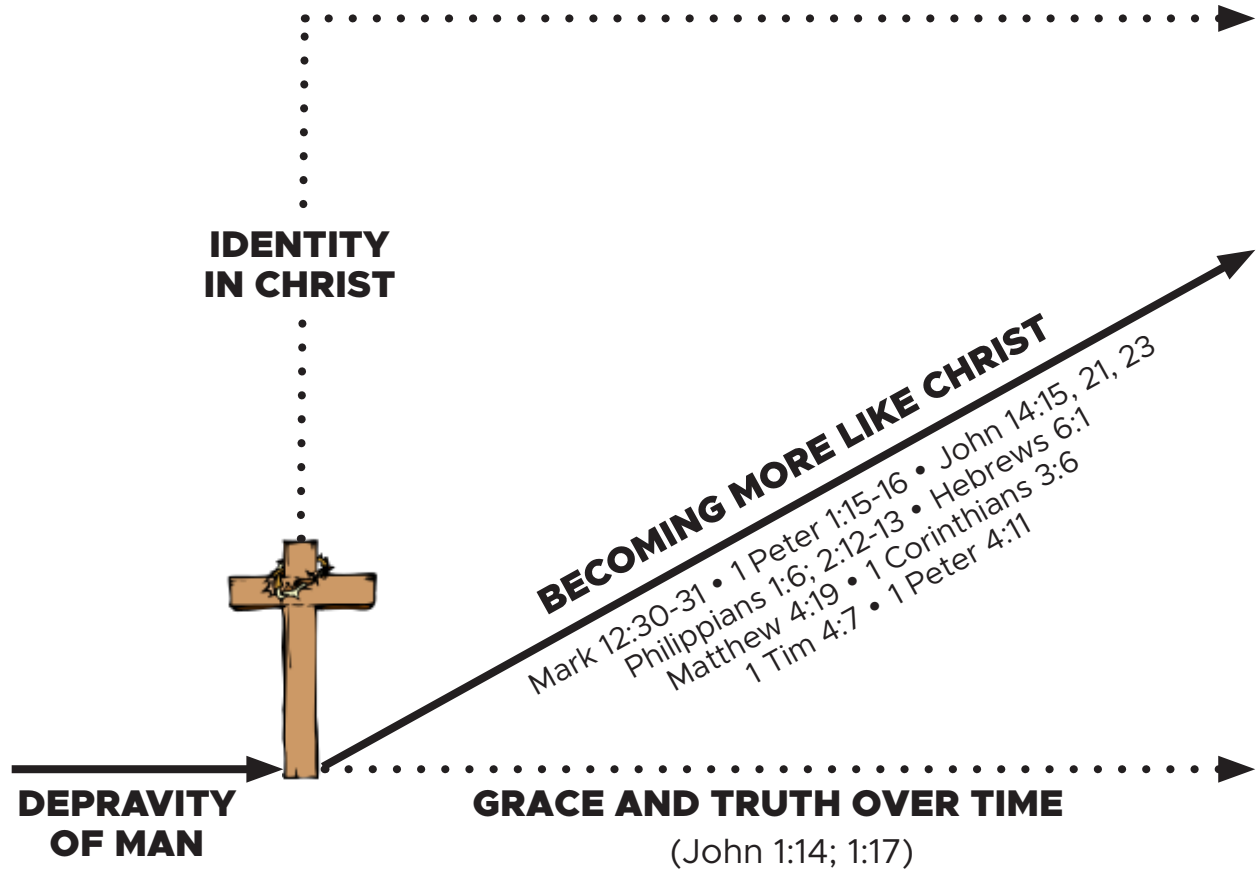
Acts 2:46 From the very beginning the church would gather (in the Temple) and scatter throughout the city (from house to house) and spend time together in large groups and in small groups!

Acts 20:20 The house to house ministry that started under the Apostles direction continued under Paul and among the Gentile believers. This is a basic standard of doing ministry. How can we do a better job at embracing this basic tenant the church?

2. Gospel Growth

The message of the Gospel saves us and grows us. An ever-increasing understanding of God's holiness and our sin (through God's Word, God's people and God's Spirit), draws us to the cross in repentance and faith. A deepening understanding of Jesus' work on our behalf increases our love, joy, gratitude, and fellowship with God, **becoming more like Christ.** Jesus and the finished work of the cross becomes ever-more beautiful and amazing as we fall more in love with Him. The Gospel grows us by leading us to a Christ-centered life of increasing dependence, worship, love, and service, leading us away from moralism or performance to find acceptance before God. **Only in the Gospel do we have hope in a world of sin and suffering.** The Gospel transforms our hearts, grows his church, and is at work in his world.

Becoming More Like Christ



Matthew 4:19 Why is it essential for us to understand the difference between our identity in Christ and His process for our growth?

How do we define spiritual maturity according to **Mark 12:30-31**? What happens when we use other standards?

What happens to our people when we do not understand and honor the element of time in the process of growth?

What happens if we are hard on truth and soft on grace?
Too much grace and without enough truth?

How does this environment lead to authentic community?
How does a proper understanding of grace and truth over time effect the discipleship process?

How would it influence the watching world to see and experience God's people living this way with one another out in the community?

How does **1 Peter 1:15-16** relate to **Mark 12:30-31**?

John 14:15, 21, 23 What happens when we forget to connect outward obedience to an inward love for Christ?

1 Corinthians 3:6; Philippians 1:6; 2:12-13 What is God's role in our spiritual growth and sanctification?

Hebrews 6:1; 1 Timothy 4:7; 1 Peter 4:11 What is our role?

Colossians 1:28-29 What does this tell us about our role as leaders?

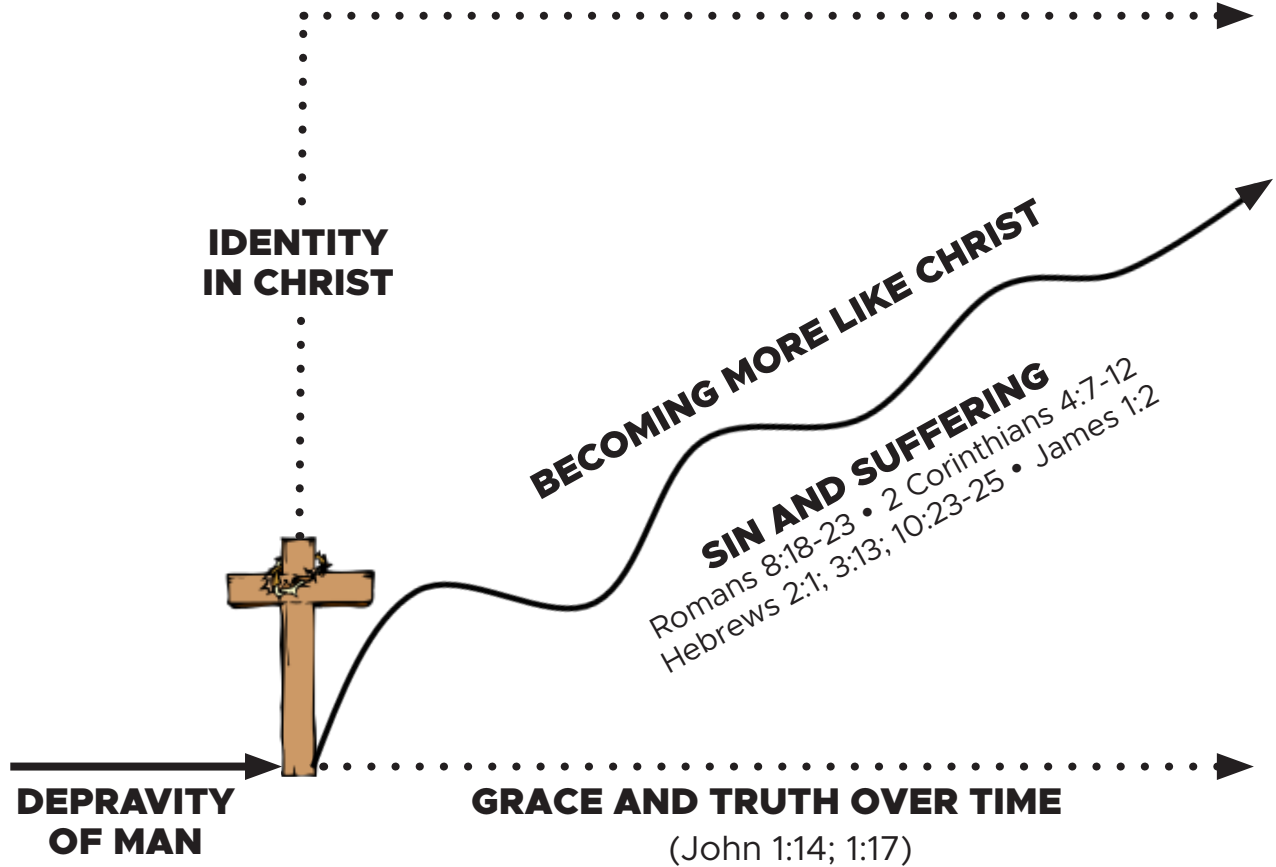
What happens to our sinful nature when we are saved (1 John 1:8; Romans 7)???

As we grow in the understanding of God's holiness what happens to our awareness of our own sin? What happens if we use something other than God for our standard of holiness?

Our relationship and identity with God is unchanging, but we can drift out of fellowship and communion with God (Hebrews 2:1, 3:13). What do we do with our sins as Christians (1 John 1:9; James 4:8-9)?

How does a growing understanding of God's holiness and awareness of our sin make the cross seem even more amazing, glorious, and beautiful in the eyes and heart of the believer?

Hope in a World of Sin and Suffering



Why did this change to a wavy line? What causes the downslopes in our lives? What is the relationship between sin and suffering?

What happened to God's creation when man sinned?
Romans 8:18-23 How is a broken and fallen world connected to our suffering? What is God's plan for his creation? How does this plan help us persevere in our times of suffering?

We live in a world of sin and suffering. What happens if we overemphasize sin over suffering or suffering over sin?

How does tragedy, loss, suffering, and pain effect our growth?

What is the role of community in this process of growth?

- 2 Corinthians 1:3-5
- Hebrews 3:13
- Hebrews 10:23-25
- Hebrews 12:1-3

What are some of the next steps for you and your group to be better prepared for suffering? Where do we need to grow in our understanding of how the Gospel applies to our life and community?

3. On Mission

The Gospel is always growing deeper and wider as it penetrates into the hearts of believers and extends out to those who have yet to know the love of Christ. In thankfulness and joy, we are quick to give love and grace to others. **The Gospel puts the church on mission in our circles of influence, in our city, and in our world** to grow God's kingdom on earth as more hearts live under the rule and reign of Christ.

God's Plan Becomes Our Mission God's plan from before time began (Ephesians 1:4) was to save for Himself a people from every tribe, tongue, and nation (Matthew 28:18-20; Revelations 5:9).

A. In our circles of influence

2 Corinthians 5:20 Does a country send an ambassador to a foreign land to simply live behind a closed door and keep to themselves? How are we to live our lives?

Describe a fully functioning ambassador:

2 Corinthians 5:14 Where do we find motivation?

Can you communicate the basics of the Gospel in 10 words? Try writing it out:

B. In our city

Jeremiah 29:4-7 – What does God command his people to do in this foreign city?

Luke 19:41-44 – Jerusalem rejects Jesus. How does Jesus respond as he looks over the city? How should our heart be moved by the rejection of Jesus in our city?

C. **In our world:**

Matthew 28:18-20 What has God called us to do?

Oftentimes, “go” is viewed as the imperative in these verses, but “make disciples” is the command Jesus gives. Going, “baptizing,” and “teaching” are all participles that modify how we go about making disciples.

What happens if our end goal of making disciples is less than “all nations?”

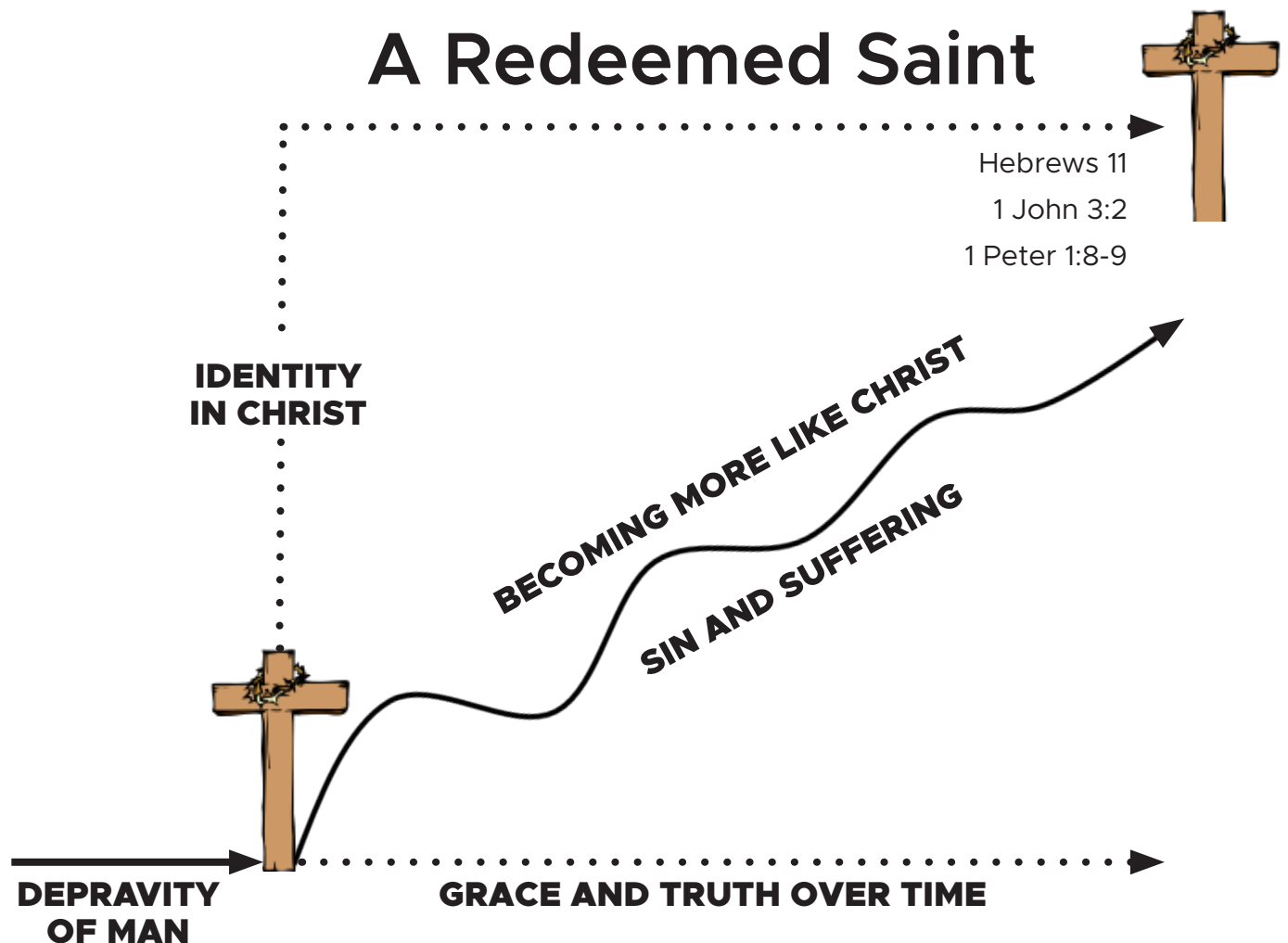
GOD RESTORES

*God makes all things new: the redeemed saint,
a glorious bride, and a renewed creation.*



All things are made new! In the final chapter, God faithfully completes his redemptive plan. Through the work of Christ, all of creation will be restored, renewed, and reconciled to Him. God is presently at work in our hearts and in his universe, pointing to the day when all things will be made new. God's redemptive plan will culminate in a redeemed people living with Him in a new heaven and a new earth—a holy and restored creation that will worship and enjoy its Creator forever!

A Redeemed Saint



John 14:1-3 How does Jesus comfort His disciples?

1 John 3:2 What happens when Jesus returns?

1 John 3:3 How does this future reality impact our daily life?

Colossians 3:1-4 Describe the past, present and future work of the Gospel communicated in these verses:

1 Peter 1:8-9 How can we love Him even though we do not see Him? How does our faith in the active work of Christ, in the fulfillment of our salvation, impact our hearts?

Hebrews 11:1 What is the definition of faith?

Hebrews 11:6 We are saved by faith, but how is faith a component of our daily life and our spiritual growth?

Hebrews 11:23-27 How would you describe Moses' childhood?

What drove him to reject the riches of Egypt? How do we see faith and hope driving Moses to holy living?

Hebrews 11:13-16 How can you better lift up the eyes of your heart towards a better country? How should that impact your daily struggle with sin, doubt, and suffering?

1. A Glorious Bride

Ephesians 5:28-32 What role is Jesus playing in relation to the church? How is he growing the church?

What is marriage supposed to represent? Why would God create this real-life illustration?

Revelation 19:7-8 What is being celebrated in heaven?

Revelation 21:2; 9 Both of these passages refer to the New Jerusalem. This reference includes the city, but we should primarily emphasize the residents of the city = the church. In 21:3-4, it is the relationship between God and his people (who will dwell in the city with the Lamb) that is celebrated.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 The Spirit dwells in his people, establishing them (1 Corinthians 3:11), and growing them (1 Corinthians 3:7) in preparation for this great day.

If we viewed our brothers and sisters in Christ as one with us, together being the future Glorified Bride of Christ, how would it change the way we treat them? Honor them? Serve them? Love them?

Revelation 21:3-4 What will it be like to be with Christ forever?

2. A Renewed Creation

“And He who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’”

– REVELATION 21:5

Revelation 21:1 What will happen to the earth and the heavens?



Revelation 21:10-14 What will it be like?

Revelation 21:22-27 What will be the best thing about the new heaven and the new earth?

- “The supreme demonstration of God’s love was the sending of his Son to die for our sins and to rise again so that sinners might have the right to approach God and might have the pleasure of his presence forever” (Piper, 14).
- The good of the Gospel “is God himself seen and savored in all his glory” (Piper, 37).

3. God's Glory

The Good News of the Gospel is God's plan...for God's glory.

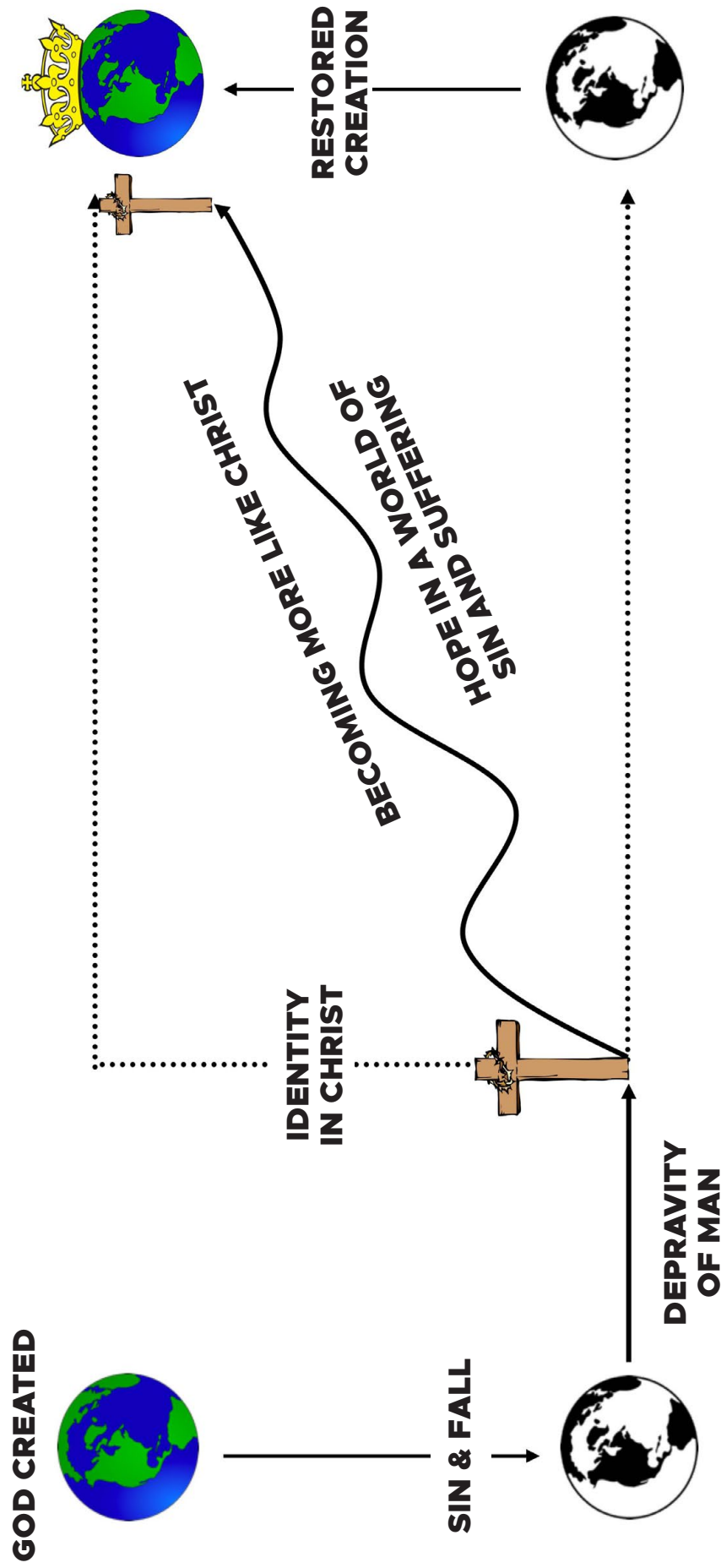
Don't miss the fact that it is God who initiates everything, accomplishes everything, and does all of it ultimately for his glory. The Gospel is a story of God's Glory!

4. God's Glory is our Good!

The triune God, abounding in love, extends fellowship to a people he himself redeemed.

It is to our joy and pleasure to bask in the love, grace, and kindness of Almighty God, united to Christ our Savior King for all of eternity.

The Gospel





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Explicit Gospel

Matt Chandler

Introduction

“The Gospel is the heart of the Bible. Everything in Scripture is either preparation of the Gospel, presentation of the Gospel, or participation in the Gospel.”

– DAVE HARVEY

Can you give some examples of how this quote applies to different passages or books of the Bible?

What does Chandler mean by the “assumed Gospel” (pg. 14, paragraph 1)?

What happens when we focus on being conformed and not transformed by the work of the Gospel (pg. 14, paragraph 1)?

Where do you see the tendency towards self-reliance in your own heart and those around you?

What does Chandler mean by:

“Gospel on the ground” (pg. 16)?

“Gospel in the air?”

“Both are necessary so that we are not reductionistic in how we define what God is up to both in our hearts and in the universe around us” (pg. 17). What is the danger of emphasizing one over the other?

What is our tendency—personally and in church?

Ch. 1 – God

Share some of your thoughts and applications from each of the sections of this chapter.

God

God's Transcendent Creativity

God's Sovereign Knowing

God's Perfect Self-Sufficiency

God's Glorious Self-Regard

The Roots of Worship

Ch. 5 – Creation

What are some of the key thoughts that you got out of this chapter?

Ch. 2 – Man

The universe is called “the theater of God’s glory” (pg. 40) and creation exists to showcase the worship of this God. What has man done?

The Severity of God How does God respond?

The Fall of Man and the Glory of God Is Gehenna a proper punishment of man’s sin? Why?

What does John Piper mean when he says, “The horror of hell is an echo of the infinite worth of God’s glory” (pg. 45)?

The Place of God’s Justifiable Wrath & The Weight of God’s Wrath What do you learn about hell from these sections?

Ch. 6 – The Fall

How has original sin affected the world and the cosmos?

What does “Shalom has been shattered” mean (pg. 113)?

From Chandler’s point of view, what do we learn about the results of the fall of humanity and creation (and their relationships) from Ecclesiastes (pgs. 113-126)?

What are your thoughts on the sections:

The Search as Sense

The Ache for Real Satisfaction

Ch. 3 – Christ

Write down some of your thoughts from each section:

Christ

God's Wrath in Christ's Cross

The Satisfactory Sacrifice

What are examples of how we idolatrously try to elevate ourselves above the finished work of Christ?

Ch. 4 – Response

Explain this quote: “True Gospel preaching always changes the heart. It either awakens it or hardens it.”

Write your thoughts from these sections:

Faith versus Works

Clay and Ice, Cuts and Scars

Response and Responsibility

The Unadjusted Gospel is the Empowered Gospel How do we often adjust the Gospel to try to make it more acceptable to the hearer? What is the difference between contextualizing versus adjusting or augmenting the Gospel?

Response to the Gospel is Not the Gospel

The Response of Faith

Ch. 7 – Reconciliation

Explain these quotes:

“The good news is that God’s plan for redemption is scaled to his glory, encompassing all creation” (pg. 135).

“One of the things we’ve tried to do at The Village is what we call the ‘green house.’ We’re trying to do mechanical with organic simultaneously. We want people to learn, know, and understand doctrine and theology, but we want them to do that within the context of relationships” (pg. 148). How can we improve our “green house” at Bible Center?

How do we go through this change of perspective from “‘I need to find my life’s purpose in this work,’ to ‘I need to bring God’s purpose to this work’” (pg. 149)?

What is the “incarnational mode of ministry” (pg. 148)?

Do you have any other major thoughts, observations or applications from this chapter?

Ch. 8 – Consummation

What can happen when we get wrapped up in the trees of the end times instead of the big picture (the forest)?

The Importance of Consummation What are Hoekema’s three reasons for the importance of understanding the consummation of all things (pgs. 157-159)?

Describe the **New Heavens and the New Earth**:

What will our **Resurrection Bodies** be like?

What will it be like **Living as New Creations**?

Shaped by the Gospel

Timothy Keller

Introduction

What happens when our ministries and methods do not reflect our doctrine or culture?

How do we develop a theological vision?

What is the purpose of having a theological vision?

Balancing the 3 Axes

Gospel How are legalism and relativism defined?

Define these words below. Can you give an example of each?

“Dead” orthodoxy

Imbalanced orthodoxy

Clueless orthodoxy

Which way do we tend to lean as a church? What is the consequence of not finding balance?

The City Describe the City axis:

What happens if we under adapt to a culture?

Movement Describe the movement axis:

Which direction does Bible Center tend to lean on this axis? Structured organization or fluid? What can be the result of falling out of balance and leaning in this direction?

Theological Vision –
A vision of what you are going to do with your doctrine in a particular time and place.
A faithful restatement of the Gospel and its implications for life, ministry, and mission.

Ch. 1 – The Gospel is Not Everything

This chapter looks at several truths that are not the Gospel. In what sense are each of these not the Gospel?

- Everything the Bible teaches
- A way of life; something we do
- Joining Christ's kingdom program; a divine rehabilitation plan for the world

If the Gospel is not everything, then what is the Gospel, exactly? Explain “The Gospel is news that creates a life of love, but the life of love is not itself the Gospel.”

How do we distinguish between “the Gospel” and “not the Gospel?”

What are the ramifications of the wrath of God (pg. 28)? What relationships have been affected?

What are the implications of the following sentences (pg. 37):

- “But God is triune, and therefore love, friendship, and community are intrinsic to him and at the heart of all reality.”
- “So a triune God created us (John 1:1-4), but he would not have created us **to get** the joy of mutual love and service, because he already had that. Rather, he created us **to share** in his love and service.”

Define each of these words and explain how they inform the Gospel (pgs. 39-41):

- **Incarnation**
- **Substitution**
- **Restoration**

How do we make sure that “every form of ministry is empowered by the Gospel, based on the Gospel, and is a result of the Gospel” (pg. 43)?

Ch. 2 – The Gospel is Not a Simple Thing

In our attempt to clarify and simplify the Gospel, we must not reduce the Gospel to less than what it is. Though we try to summarize it into 10 words, these words are merely a starting point from which to jump into these large subjects that must be contextualized and clarified so that those hearing it can understand and receive the truths of the Gospel.

Piper teaches how the Gospel can be seen from many different angles, yet Christ is always the theme. “That good (of the Gospel) is God himself seen and savored in all his glory. Focusing on facets of a diamond without seeing the beauty of the whole is demeaning to the diamond” (Piper, 37).

The Gospel is communicated through storylines that run throughout Scripture. Different methods of study are helpful to define, understand, and communicate these themes.

What is the Systematic Theological Method?

What is the Redemptive-Historical Method?

What is the benefit (and necessity) of using both methods to understand the Gospel?

Describe each of these pictures/examples in Scripture:

- The exile and our homecoming
- The covenant and its fulfillment
- The kingdom and its coming

“The Gospel has supernatural versatility to address the particular hopes, fears, and idols of every culture and every person” (pg. 57). Can you think of times (or discussions) in your life when one of these descriptions may be more helpful than another?

Ch. 3 – The Gospel Affects Everything

Describe the “upside-down” aspect of the Gospel:

How should that impact a Christian’s daily life and the life of the church?

What happens if we have an outward first focus on the Gospel?

How will having a correct “inside-out” point of view increase our emphasis on small groups and community?

What are the implications of the “forward-back” aspect of the Gospel?

“The Gospel is not just the ABCs, but the A-to-Z of the Christian life” (pg. 65). Explain what this means:

How is the Gospel applied to:

discouragement and depression? race and culture?

love and relationships? witness?

sexuality? human authority?

family? guilt and self-image?

self-control? joy and humor?

attitudes towards class?

Ch. 4 – The Need for Gospel Renewal

“Gospel renewal is a life-changing recovery of the Gospel” (pg.101). How does Keller define “personal renewal?”

How does the Christian fall into patterns of self-justification, unbelief, and self-righteousness?

Describe what we learn from Richard Lovelace (pg. 102).

What is “unbalanced revivalism?”

What does the Bible mean when it speaks of our heart (pg. 108)?

“Gospel renewal does not simply seek to convert nominal church members; it also insists that all Christians—even committed ones—need the Spirit to bring the Gospel home to their hearts for deepened experiences of Christ’s love and power” (pg.110). How does the Gospel continue to grow, renew, and deepen the maturity of the believer?

How can we have a persistent, balanced, revivalist ministry of Gospel renewal in our church?

Ch. 5 – The Essence of Gospel Renewal

Is it possible to have someone in the church who asents to our doctrinal beliefs, participates in our activities, and lives an outwardly moral life, yet be unsaved?

How do saved Christians begin to rely upon themselves for salvation and God's acceptance?

What are the two ways we can reject God? Can we always tell by watching someone if they are rejecting the Gospel in favor of moralism?

From the Religion/Gospel comparison chart, did you relate to any of the statements made on the religion side? How so?

How could this chart (a proper Gospel understanding) help me be more like Christ and reflect the Gospel more with my spouse and children or friends and neighbors?

How is “moralistic behavior change” different than “Gospel behavior change?”

How can we say “no” to sin and yet be sinning in our heart at the same time (p 124)?

What would be some examples of modern-day idols?

“Faith in the Gospel restructures our motivations, our self-understanding, our identity, and our view of the world. It changes our hearts.”

How does the Gospel restructure our moral behavior?

How does the Gospel restructure our relationships?

Why should the Gospel be the centerpiece of our preaching and teaching?

Ch. 6 – The Work of Gospel Renewal

What are the three basic traits of frontline prayers?

Do you see the people around you praying this way? Your group? Your own personal prayer life?

What does Keller mean by “Gospel rediscovery?”

What are the “5 Gospel applications” Keller suggests (pg.134)?

“The second way for a pastor or leader to recover the Gospel in the church is through the training of lay leaders who minister the Gospel to others” (pg.134). Sound familiar?

How are we to preach in order to keep the church centered on the Gospel?

What are some “signs of renewal” (pg.142)?

How has this book changed your perspective on the Gospel?

What are some of your new hopes, desires, and prayers for Bible Center?