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# the purpose

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**Discussion questions are at the end of each session**



This is a special thank you to those  
that knowingly helped me  
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that unknowingly assisted  
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and through general discussions  
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our Lord and Creator  
for the Savior's  
presence is with me and  
with you  
always and forever, regardless

## Session 1 Purpose of a Christian

What is the purpose of a Christian?

To characterize, portray, typify & represent Christianity!

Why do it?

Because the world evaluates/assesses/judges Christianity; by its followers!

What methods have we been using?

By being, acting, behaving more like Jesus

Have we been successful in giving Jesus a good name??

Hmmmm.....

You may say, "Not so fast buddy, are you hinting I am giving Jesus a bad rap?"

Please answer the following questions honestly, and you'll quickly realize that you and I are indeed giving Jesus a bad rap;

- Jesus alienated and irritated people in His time, correct? Who did Jesus alienate and irritate?

The answer is; the priests and the learned people of faith at the time. (Mat 9:3, Mat 12:14, Mat 15:2, Mark 2:16, Mark 2:24, Mark 12:13, Luke 5:21, Luke 6:7, Luke 11:53, Luke 16:14, John 7:47, John 9:16, John 11:47-57). Meanwhile, the 'sinners' flocked to Jesus. They loved Jesus, and were not in the least irritated or felt alienated by Him.

- Who do Christians today alienate and irritate?

The answer is; We do not irritate the people of faith around us, oh no, the priests and the learned people of faith love us Christians. Meanwhile, what we Christians term as 'sinners', are the ones completely and utterly irritated and alienated by us Christians.

So what do you think?? Are you and I representing Jesus or are you and I giving Jesus a bad rap??

Hope that you agree that we Christians have missed the mark, and missed it by a whole lot.

This is not to beat us Christians over the head rather to find ways to potentially work together to figure out how we can effectively give Jesus a GOOD name. Isn't this something you'd want to do??

We all know that the world perceives us Christians in any which way but how we would want them to perceive us. Instead of me listing here how the world sees Christians; please go through your mind and say out loud a characteristic or two that the world attaches to Christians that we Christians would of course say; "Why do they say that about us?"

This was probably a painful exercise, but we need to pose some additional questions;

- 1- Is this the first time we Christians have this realization of how the world views us?

Hope you answered 'No' as it has been like this for quite some time.

- 2- What does the Christian world do in response to such realization?  
Typically, the plan emerges as; "let's be more like Jesus" and the world will know better!

- 3- Has that worked for us, for let's say the last few hundred years?

An emphatic 'No', as the world's view of Christians has not changed for quite some time now.

- 4- Then maybe we're not that good at 'behaving more like Jesus'!  
While we will continue to strive to do just that, there is one more thing we can consider.....
- 5- How about if we STOP doing what it is that we're doing to **alienate and irritate** the world around us while we're trying to be more like Jesus? Remember one CRUCIAL aspect; **Jesus** alienated and irritated the 'Believers' the 'Teachers', but not those outside the faith.....

Please; if your mind immediately goes to; "The world is just mad at me because I tell them what God's plan is for their life and they do not want to hear it!" ..... Please, keep an open mind and consider, just consider that maybe you are doing something wrong to elicit such a reaction from the world around us!

Ask yourself, "If Jesus did not irritate and alienate the people outside the faith, then why am I?"

Maybe you're thinking, "But wait a minute! What is it that I am doing wrong?? I think I am following the Bible pretty closely....."

Would you kindly consider this;



If your answer is anywhere from 'not so good' or 'thumbs down' to 'hypocrites' then there is work to be done. Please do not think to yourself; "it is those other Christians that are causing it..... it cannot be me". No, it starts with me, with me talking to my fellow Christians to help and encourage each other to do something about it.



This is the premise of this study. Examine what it is we are doing, without noticing that we are doing, that is bringing Jesus a bad rap. Once we identify these aspects, we will examine the actions needed to STOP, or at the least minimize doing such 'things' that are bringing Jesus a bad rap.

Chew on this. Our job as Christians is for our actions to reflect Jesus and therefore people would flock to him. Look at the world and how they consider Christians..... today.

We, Christians, are causing the world to fly away from Jesus.....

Therefore, there is something that we Christians are doing that is causing this phenomenon.

Let me give you a quick example. A husband loves his wife, and does loving things quite frequently to express his love to her. Sadly, he has anger issues, and when he flips, he does hit her..... One time he said to his wife lovingly, "I promise to work on more ways to demonstrate to you that I love you." He saw tears flowing out of her eyes and then heard her say, "You do plenty to show me that you love me. I do not need more acts of love, rather what I need for you to do is to stop hitting me!!"

In the same fashion, it is not what we Christians need to do or do more of **rather** it is what we need to stop doing or start to decrease doing bit by bit by bit. Nothing happens overnight but with slow progress, we'll get there.

May this journey take us in a gentle spirit and with open minds to review what it is that I, that you, that we Christians, might be doing that is causing the world to distance itself from Christianity. The goal is that we recognize, then accept, then begin, then progress slowly towards reflecting the LOVE that Jesus, God on Earth, talked about over and over and over again 😊

## Session 1 discussion:

- 1- What is the purpose of a Christian? Think of Love God Love Others as the totality of the Lord's commands.
- 2- Have Christians today given God a good representation?
- 3- How about from the perspective of non-Christians?  
"Your Jesus was a great role model, but today's Christians are....."
- 4- Can we agree that the world views us as hypocritical, judgmental, self-righteous, holier than thou and arrogant?
- 5- If God's highest command is to exude LOVE and such are the characteristics that the world uses to describe us, then are we giving God a bad rap?

It is not about who's to blame or about feeling bad about it rather it is about what I can do to bring forth a change to represent the purpose of a Christian.

This is a study to investigate, explore and discuss applicable changes to do just that, without any condemnation or guilt for **THAT** is the key.

1Cor 13:4-7 Love is patient, love is kind. It **does not** envy, it **does not** boast, it **is not** proud. It **does not** dishonor others, it **is not** self-seeking, it **is not** easily angered, it **keeps no** record of wrongs. Love **does not** delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

## Session 2 How do we act

A quick recap from the first session; Jesus alienated and irritated the priests and the people of faith at His time, while the faith outcasts flocked to Jesus. Meanwhile, we Christians today, alienate and irritate the faith outcasts while the priests and people of faith basically tell us; “Right-on brother & sister, stay this course.”

So let’s look at who were the priests and people of faith at the time of Jesus? They were the Pharisees & Sadducees. Jesus acknowledged that they are indeed the teachers and the religious authority at the time (Mat 2:4, Mark 2:16, Luke 5:17, John 8:3)

What did the Pharisees & Sadducees do, like what did they preach, instruct and encourage? Here are a few of the ABC’s of the Jewish law they followed and taught.

- The most important thing in life is following God’s rules.
- Come to the Temple every Saturday to worship the Lord.
- Help the poor, the hungry, and the needy in the Jewish community.
- Asked believers to dwell mostly with believers and avoid non-believers.
- Point out those who do not have the right theology or doctrine and correct them.
- Gathered in the Temple courts and communed together to encourage like mindedness.
- Advocated tithing for it is God’s command.

- Obedience to God and the necessity of offering the required sacrifices to atone for your sins.
- Be grateful that you are a Jew, as God devised the method of forgiveness for you, while others are doomed.
- Stand united against those that oppose your values.
- People who follow God's rules are better off than those who do not.

Is there anything wrong with any of these listed above?? The Pharisees & Sadducees, the teachers of the law advocated for all that and followed it.

Yet, Jesus called them brood of vipers and snakes (Mat 12:34, Mat 23:33), as well as John the Baptist calling them the same (Mat 3:7, Luke 3:7).

They were also characterized as hypocrites (Mark 7:6) as they honor the Lord with their lips but their hearts are far from Him.

Matthew Chapter 23 pretty much tears into the teachers of the law.

But why?? What did they do??? Better yet, what **SIN** did they commit??

Is it at all possible that these items we listed above, although appearing benign, are somehow flawed?

How were the Pharisees and Sadducees characterized again??

**Arrogant Hypocrites better than others** (Mat 23:13,15,23, Mark 12:38)

Are these characteristics of someone with 'their hearts' in the right place.....!?

Does the world look at Christians today and characterize us as Arrogant, Hypocrites, Self-righteous, Holier-than-thou? Are there similarities between them then and us now??

Now let's list the things that we Christians pride ourselves on doing and compare them one by one to the list of what the Pharisees and Sadducees preached and taught, as listed in beginning of this session!

Go on, flip back up a page or two and read through the list again, and compare to what we do today, what we advocate for today and what we promote today for a good standing Christian.

"What's wrong with these?" you might ask. But don't you think the Pharisees also exclaimed that they are doing everything by the BOOK! Yet, how did Jesus characterize them?

This is not a condemnation; rather the hope is that it is an AAHAA moment. It does not mean that we stop these activities, rather that we should investigate **HOW** we carry them out.

May this journey take us in a gentle spirit and with open minds to review what it is that I, that you, that we Christians, might be doing that is causing the world to distance itself from Christianity. The goal is that we recognize, then accept, then begin, then progress slowly towards reflecting the LOVE that Jesus, God on Earth, talked about over and over and over again 😊

## Session 2 discussion:

- 1- Who were the Pharisees? Did they teach the people good stuff in the Bible? Lev 9 sacrificing to atone for their sins (Jesus is our sacrifice); Lev 19:18 Love your neighbor as Jesus also taught (read Lev 19:14-37)
- 2- Did Jesus ever once praise or commend the Pharisees, the religious leaders that led their people, on the good things they were doing?
- 3- Other than Jesus calling them brood of vipers, Mat 12:34 & Mat 23:33, did Jesus reprimand them for holding tradition more valuable than the teaching of the Bible? Mat 15:3-7, Mark 7:8-13
- 4- “You’ve heard it said..... but I tell you.....” Does that sound familiar? What does this structure indicate to you? Mark 7:9-13 is the “you’ve heard it is” and Mark 7:14 is the “but I tell you...”
- 5- What are some of the good things we are doing now?
- 6- Do we praise ourselves for them?
- 7- What are some of the bad things we are doing now?
- 8- Are we ignoring them?
- 9- Would Jesus standing here be praising us for the good we do, or be pointing out the bad and how we value our traditions?

Remember the WWJD ?? How about the WWJND ??

What would Jesus **NOT** do....

1Cor 13:4-7 Love is patient, love is kind. It **does not** envy, it **does not** boast, it **is not** proud. It **does not** dishonor others, it **is not** self-seeking, it **is not** easily angered, it **keeps no** record of wrongs. Love **does not** delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Remember, none of this is for condemnation, guilt or shame. No.

## Session 3 Are we Arrogant & Self-righteous

Arrogance; is the outward display of an attitude of superiority.

Self-righteous; is the inward feeling/knowledge of moral superiority.

One person can feel but not display, display but not feel or feel and display.

A quick recap from previous sessions;

- You and I are part of one community regardless of denomination called Christians and our purpose is to reflect Christianity to the world.
- Christians, not Christianity, gives the world the unfavorable present perception of Christianity
- I and my fellow Christians are behaving and acting more like Pharisees; dogmatic, unforgiving and rigid thus portraying Christianity as such, while Jesus is all about Love, Grace and Forgiveness.
- Jesus alienated and irritated the priests and people of faith while the faith outcasts flocked to Him. Meanwhile, today, Christians irritate and alienate the faith outcasts.

Hope you and I agree that in order to accurately reflect Jesus and demonstrate Christianity in its true essence, we need to figure out how we would not alienate and irritate the faith outcasts while living out Christianity. To evaluate if we are successful is easy. Ask the question, "Are we giving the Jesus vibe to the faith outcasts?" Or are the faith outcasts still saying, "We love your Jesus, but you, you are nothing like Him!"

Do you see that a change is in order? I hope you do.

Have you been cringing at me using the phrase 'faith outcasts'? I won't from here on out.

In order to change how we carry out our actions, first we need to examine why are we doing what we are presently doing, for if we do not know that, then why change it? Better yet, how do we even know what needs changing?

So let's delve into this exploration. Here's a short story to begin with.

We've all heard the stories, and there are many, where a parent comes from nothing and works so very hard to create this huge successful company. Reached such heights of success and did not need anything anymore. Yet the diligence in the parent's work ethic became even stronger. They cared so much for the people in their company and for the health of the company, for the workers and the company became like a child..... You do not love your child to get, gain or achieve anything rather you simply just LOVE your child.

Then arrives the sons and daughters of the owner. They take over the company and soon the company falls apart. What happened? This was quite a strong company! Typically the sons and daughters are not as invested into the company as were their mother or father. Why aren't they? Well, you see; they do not have the same relationship with the workers. The sons and daughters know that they do not need to work long hours. They already have money invested that'll last them for generations to come. But mostly they do not feel that the workers are like their own children, the LOVE is not there. The, 'I am going to hug you even if you have an infectious disease cause you're my daughter/son' is simply not there. Then why invest their heart and soul into this company??

How do we characterize the sons and daughters in this case?

We can characterize the children as spoiled, they took things for granted or did not appreciate what they had. Why? Because they were born into it, they had a chip on their shoulder, they were snobbish and had their nose in the air, possibly arrogant, prideful. The BIG question is;



***Are any of these characteristics considered 'sinful'?***

***The answer is typically; No, these are not sins. Of course the attitude can be better, but not sins....***

This is the point where major disagreements will arise, but please be patient and painfully honest when you answer this question,

***When Jesus called the Pharisees 'hypocrites', snakes and 'brood of vipers', did they commit a 'sin' as defined in the Ten Commandments, or was it their 'attitude' that revealed their hearts!?***

***Do you think the Pharisees were like, "Whaaaat! Whaaaat! We're doing everything by the book! Why do you say these things about us, Jesus?"***

Again, this is not an attempt to condemn or to make us Christians 'feel' bad, rather it is the place where we need to come and EXAMINE what we are doing, HOW we are doing it, and TAKE CORRECTIVE actions if we feel convicted that this is indeed what Jesus would want us to do. (James 4:17)

A quick review of the 10 commandments, the basic law back then and for all intended purposes still applicable today as the plumb line is as follows;

**No other god than God / No images or idols / Don't misuse My name / Hold the Sabbath**

**Honor mom & dad / No murder / No adultery / No stealing / No lying / No coveting (Ex 20 & Deut 5)**

Wouldn't you agree that if these are written on the wall somewhere, you or I would stand in front of it, fold my arms, place one hand under my chin and examine the Ten Commandments and think to one-self, "Check. Check.....Yeap, I think I've got this."

Please, please, this is where we can get lost in the shuffle..... all kinds of arguments/discussions will now start about; no one is perfect, we need to

examine what 'idols' we may have in our lives not just stone statues, adultery can be in the heart and not just physical, is a white lie considered 'False Testimony' ..... and so on.

Please hold these discussions to the side for now, as this is what distracts us from the heart of the matter!

Why else would have the Pharisees back then, and Christians today, be seen by the world as; have a chip on their shoulder, arrogant, self-righteous, holier than thou, if we did not actually give out that vibe!? Could it be that in **OUR HEARTS** believe that we are '**GOOD**'! Think about it!! Why else would we emanate that vibe?

Why would we deep down think/believe/know that we are '**GOOD**'!? Even Jesus did not like being called 'GOOD'!! (Mark 10:17, Luke 18:18) and Jesus further declared that **No One Is Good Except God Alone**.... (Mark 10:18, Luke 18:19).

There is nothing wrong with feeling GOOD about oneself because Eph 2:8 "For it is by grace you have been saved, ....."

And indeed it is through Grace, and Grace is indeed the focal point of Christianity, like; it is '**the thing**' if you know what I mean. But should 'Grace' generate the perception of; arrogance, holier than thou, chip on our shoulder and so on???

Of course Grace has nothing to do with these characteristics! Rather it should and must display in an opposite set of characteristics..... What are these opposite characteristics? (Gal 5:22-23)

Humble, meek, modest, unpretentious, gentle..... ARE THESE WORDS THAT JESUS **used** and **continues** to use to describe his followers???

"But we Christians are humble, modest and gentle", is indeed our prevalent thought..... Correct?

If indeed we are humble, modest and gentle, there is no way the world would see arrogant, self-righteous and snobby! Therefore we Christians must be acting in such a way; our attitudes are as such; and the impression and vibe we are generating are indeed showing and reflecting that we Christians are arrogant, self-righteous and holier than thou. You would then agree if I say, "But of course Christianity in and of itself is not like that!"

This dilemma between Christians and Christianity indicates that there is a disconnect somewhere. And it is we Christians that ought to take responsibility and find ways to correct this **MAJOR** disconnect.

Recall the example of the abusive husband..... giving more love does not take away the pain caused by his abusive behavior..... he needs to get the abusive behavior under control.

Let us then consider what it is we must STOP doing or in the least minimize doing to change how the world views Christians and therefore bring them closer to considering Christianity, and not be repulsed or nauseated at it.

May this journey take us in a gentle spirit and with open minds to review what it is that I, that you, that we Christians, might be doing that is causing the world to distance itself from Christianity. The goal is that we recognize, then accept, then begin, then progress slowly towards reflecting the LOVE that Jesus, God on Earth, talked about over and over and over again 😊

### Session 3 discussion:

- 1- No other god than God / No images or idols / Don't misuse My name / Hold the Sabbath / Honor mom & dad / No murder / No adultery / No stealing / No lying / No coveting (Ex 20 & Deut 5)  
Would you say Joe and Jane Christian would be; 'check' check 'check'?
- 2- Which one of these that we'd label, 'yeah we do this one a lot?'
- 3- Why is coveting there? It does not seem as bad as the others!  
What would you relate that to? Could we say it is envy and greed?
- 4- What is false testimony? We may gloss over that one, but it is; Not telling the truth! What would it relate to? Lying. Are white lies included? How about gossip?
- 5- Is Eph 2:8 a source of feeling good about oneself? It is a beautiful gift!
- 6- Could knowledge of Grace generate the characteristics in Gal 5:22-23?
- 7- Compare the Gal 5:22-23 characteristics **to** how the world describes Christians today. Can these two sets be any further apart?
- 8- To correct this, we need to ask what is it that caused us to be inverse of what we ought to be? Could it be that we've taken the feeling "I am GOOD" to an extreme that it has created this perception?
- 9- What was Jesus' reaction to 'hey, good teacher'? Mark 10:17-18 & Luke 18:18-19. And who is good?

We do say that we are humble, modest, gentle and unpretentious. Do you see the dilemma of how we see ourselves versus how the world sees us?

1Cor 13:4-7 Love is patient, love is kind. It **does not** envy, it **does not** boast, it **is not** proud. It **does not** dishonor others, it **is not** self-seeking, it **is not** easily angered, it **keeps no** record of wrongs. Love **does not** delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Remember, none of this is for condemnation, guilt or shame. No.

## Session 4 How do we view Sin

A quick Recap;

- The purpose of a Christian is to reflect Christianity
- Jesus irritated and alienated the teachers of the Jewish law.
- Christians today seem attractive to the teachers of the Christian law, while alienating non-believers as we act more like the Pharisees.
- The world does see Christians today as Arrogant & Self-righteous and we are most probably acting in ways to gain this reputation.

So let's see why we Christians might be earning this reputation.

My daughter-in-law Kelli said to me; "You cuss a lot while we talk, please consider that the girls (my granddaughters) are watching you, and I do not want them to learn this from you. Please refrain from using profanity around them." I believe you would agree that she's justified in saying so, correct? I would immediately become apologetic, as I know that I cuss, and you would hope that I would mind my language at least in front of my granddaughters, correct?

Now let's change Kelli's statement to me to the following;

"You come across so arrogant and self-righteous, and I say this to you in love, please consider that the girls (my granddaughters) are watching you, and I do not want them to learn this attitude from you. Please consider watching how you behave around them." What do you think my reaction would be!?

Probably I do not believe that I am arrogant and self-righteous. Chances are I would be offended and possibly get into a defensive argument with my daughter in law. But if I am perceived as such, may be indeed I am arrogant and self-righteous but just do not realize it.....!

First, here's the definition of **arrogant**; 1- Disposed to exaggerate one's own worth or importance often by an overbearing manner. 2- Showing/ exhibiting an offensive attitude of superiority. An outwards attitude.

Second, let us agree that 'arrogant' is not a complimentary term. Therefore, one would not consider him or herself as arrogant, and probably would say; "Me? No way. Definitely am not. I am confident and assertive, but not arrogant, not in the least."

Let's not forget **Self-righteous**, the 'inward' attitude of superiority. It is harder to qualify this, but here's a stab at it. I am hanging out with Jeff, my son in law, and my granddaughter. Something takes place that I do not approve of, and I think to myself haughtily, "Ehh, Jeff should have said..... How could he not reprimand her!" You may think, "Well Reda, you did not say anything about it..... So what's wrong with thinking that to yourself?" Let me tell you, the more you add these disapproving thoughts inwardly, the more you are distancing yourself from that person. It is impossible to LOVE someone while adding distance between you both. Label whatever you are doing with that person anything but LOVE. Therefore, the more self-righteous one feels on the inside, the more one isolates themselves from others. Jesus never isolated Himself and that's why people flocked to him. While today, as we Christians isolate ourselves further and further, the world shuns away from us.

So as a Christian, each person needs to choose one of these two following options;

- A) Am I open to considering that if the world sees us as such, and I am part of the 'us' then I need an intervention to examine how I can contribute to the 'us' in a way that would change this world view?

OR

B) The world is confused and they hate us and therefore label us with things like arrogant, self-righteous and such. I am perfectly fine. Actually I am the total opposite of arrogant and/or self-righteous. Therefore, when the world finds Jesus, they will realize my true character!

The question is; If 'my' goal, if 'my' charge, if 'my' mission and the purpose of 'my' existence is to reach the 'world', then which one would I choose; A or B? The hope is that you choose option '**A**'.

Remember; Jesus attracted people shunned by the teachers of the law and did not alienate and irritate them? Yet we, you and I, today irritate and alienate the world..... Daily.

This is a hard pill to swallow..... That is to admit to oneself; "Maybe I am arrogant. Maybe I am self-righteous. But why in the world would I feel/act/ behave that way..... Where did this come from!? If I know the root cause, I'll have a place to start and work on behaving **NOT ARROGANT and/or NOT SELF-RIGHTEOUS.**"

Let us consider why would someone act arrogant and/or self-righteous? What are the things that lead to such actions, behaviors and attitudes?

**For one to act as such they must excel at something way better than others, and typically have or possess something others do not have.**

Therefore, what is it that we Christians think that we excel at? And what is it that we have or possess that others do not have?

There is no way to do this but blurt them out and then we can flesh them out a bit at a time;

- 1) We Christians feel that we got SIN under control in our lives and think we excel at keeping SIN at bay.

- 2) What we possess that the rest of the world does not have is;  
SALVATION.

In this session we will discuss SIN and next session we will discuss SALVATION

Many may argue that this is nonsense. You may say, no we do not feel that we got sin under control for we Christians freely use the following statement;

- a- "I am a sinner always needing God's grace".
- b- "When I was a sinner before knowing Jesus", or "Now that I have repented from my sins, I have been redeemed, and Jesus helps me walk the path".

But think about it, or better yet, read through them again.....

Both "God's Grace" and "now that I have repented"; cause us deep down inside, we Christians, to believe that "I am alright with God" or "I am doing good" or "I've done well keeping on the straight and narrow", and so on.

There is a very good chance that right now, you are like, "what's wrong with that?" or "Come oooooon now, I know I am a sinner."

Please ask this question of yourself; what are the sins that you have struggled with yesterday, just yesterday. What are the sins that you are struggling with today? Do you actually ask God for forgiveness for a specific sin you did today or yesterday? Or is it more like a blanket statement; "Forgive me Lord as I am a sinner"? Does your daily sin cross your mind at all? If a small thought just crossed your mind saying, "What daily sin are you talking about?" Then this thought should be a wake-up call..... then indeed in the back of our minds we believe that we are toeing the Biblical line pretty good.

Please understand this is not to beat me, you or anyone else on the head, rather it is to ask ourselves; where is our state of mind? What is my attitude?



What is my perspective about myself? For without this reflection/ examination/ evaluation of my behavior, our collective behavior will not change. We will remain the same to the world around us and miss out on reaching people.

So let us assume that although you are not convinced, you are still listening. Are you wondering about the salvation part? Rest assured this is not to question your salvation in any way, and we will circle back to it, but let's stick with the 'sin' portion for now.

If you want to see why I say that we Christians believe that we excel at 'toeing the Biblical line', then please be patient and brutally honest with yourself as we go through the following discussion.

What is one of the 'BIG' sins that we Christians primarily come out very strong against?

How about Sexual Immorality represented in LGBTQ? Isn't it at the top of the list?

First of all I hope that you are nodding in agreement right now, for this indeed is pretty much a biggy.

- 1) To acknowledge that there are BIG & small sins, is an admission that we Christians created this categorization as it is **NOT Biblical**. Plain & Simple. We all **KNOW** this; God does not differentiate a simple WHITE LIE from MURDER. This is who our God is. Period. I do not need to convince you, as you already know this. Here is a list of Verses that lump sexual immorality with lying, greed, jealousy, even just anger (Gal 5:19-21, Col 3:5-11, 1Cor 6:9-10). Did you know that the Bible says that 'Any Wrongdoing' any wrongdoing is SIN?? (1 John 5:17) The Bible even says that if you know the good you ought to do and **NOT** do it, then this is SIN (James 4:17). Therefore, me thinking to myself, "I ought to help this lady carry the heavy shopping bags to

her car”, and then think to myself, “naaa I am in a hurry” ..... To God; this is the same SIN as ADULTRY, MURDER or EVIL DESIRES.....

Then we must beg the question; how have we fallen into widely accepting the fact that there are BIG & small sins!? Are you starting to sense that maybe there is a bit of **PRIDE** here? (Pride creates arrogance and self-righteousness)

- 2) Does sexual immorality in the Bible encompass LGBTQ? You will be surprised to know, maybe you are not surprised, that sexual immorality in the Bible covered homosexuality, bestiality and sex outside of marriage in all of its forms. The Bible is quite clear about describing situations such as a son/daughter with step-parents, step-brother/sister, and so on, in detail.

Do we go after sex before marriage as hard as LGBTQ??

Do you see why the world may see **Hypocrisy** in our stances?? This is not to say let's attack sex before marriage as hard as LGBTQ rather this is simply to point out that we Christians are indeed as the world sees us.

- 3) Not to beat a dead horse, but consider marrying a divorced person. Jesus was very clear that marrying a divorced person is committing adultery. Just a reminder, adultery is one of the Ten Commandments. Mat 5:32 Luk 16:18; Jesus said if a man marries a divorced woman, he commits adultery. I will use myself as an example here. I am married to a divorced woman. So according to Jesus I committed adultery. But let me ask you this; do you think the adultery happened the first time I slept with my wife? Or is it every time I sleep with my wife?? Again, does the world have good reason to see me and us as **hypocritical** and **prideful**?

If you are thinking I've committed adultery only the 1<sup>st</sup> time, then it is part of our hypocrisy, arrogance and self-righteousness that we need to change. Here's an example of why I say this; If I covet a lady once, then I have sinned. If I covet this same lady multiple times, I hope that you agree that every time I covet her, then I am sinning each time I covet, correct? Then there is no difference in the adultery scenario. The only reason we want to believe that I committed adultery only the 1<sup>st</sup> time I slept with my wife, is that somewhere somehow in our minds we, you, me and we Christians, have allowed ourselves to OK certain things the Bible is NOT OK with. Again, the purpose of this is not to attack those that marry divorced people, rather it is to expose to oneself, to expose to ourselves that we are indeed how the world sees us.

- 4) The Bible points out that out of all sins; sexual immorality is the only sin that one commits against one's own body, which is the temple where God resides (1Cor 6:18). This means that all other sins affect another person. Thus all sins, other than sexual immorality, shatter the 'Love One Another' commandment. This is the greatest commandment Jesus gave along with 'Love God'.

If sexual immorality is a sin against God, and not affecting 'my neighbor', as the Bible points it out, then are we Christians wearing God's shoes and simply passing judgement on this sin type; sexual immorality!? While turning a blind eye to all those other sins that affect 'MY NEIGHBOR'!?

So us Christians, leave out all the other 'small sins' that affect MY NEIGHBOR and kind of OK them. Sins like; greed, gossip, lying and so on and on. And we harp on the sin type that one commits against oneself and against God!!

5) Do you ever wonder why we Christians target this sexual immorality at the 'highest' level? It is because if we are fully concentrated on sexual immorality at the LGBTQ level, we then are distracted from looking at all other sins that are typically lumped with sexual immorality in the Bible. Why would we want to do that? Well, let's see what are these sins that the Bible lumps up with sexual immorality, wherever sexual immorality is mentioned?

6) Greed; Lying; Envy; Discord; Deceit; Lust; Hatred; Meanness; Gossip; Arrogance; Profanity; and many other along the same line.  
(2Cor 3:5-8, Gal 5:19-21, Col 3:5-8, 2Tim 3:2-5)

To reemphasize; ***these are sins that defy*** the "LOVE one another" commandment that Jesus said it is as important as the "LOVE your God", and that these two SUM UP ALL COMMANDMENTS.

Please let this sink in for a minute;

Greed; Lying; Envy; Discord; Deceit; Lust; Hatred; Meanness; Gossip; Arrogance; Profanity; and many more.....

These shatter the "LOVE ONE ANOTHER". Jesus, God on Earth, PROCLAIMED on multiple occasions, that we MUST LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

Yet, you, me and we Christians as a whole, look at these sins as.....  
I cannot even finish this sentence without asking you;

"DO WE EVEN CONSIDER Greed; Lying; Envy; Discord; Deceit; Lust; Hatred; Meanness; Gossip; Arrogance; Profanity; etc. AS SINS?????????"

If there is a 'yes' here' it is most definitely on the

"**SMAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAALL**" sin scale. This is not a condemnation of us Christians rather hopefully it is proof that indeed we are as the world sees us.

At this point, the hope is that you are indeed convinced that I, that you, that we Christians need to do something about our arrogance, our self-righteousness and our hypocrisy.

For if Jesus despised the arrogance, self-righteousness and hypocrisy of the Pharisees, then are we making Jesus cringe at our arrogance, self-righteousness and our hypocrisy!?

How would you rate the following statement;

'I believe that as a Christian, me coming to Christ should lead me to sin less and less, and my sinning less and less grows my relationship with the Lord closer and closer. In other words, me sinning less and less is evidence of a closer relationship with my Creator.'

Would you say this statement is 'True' or 'False'?

I believe that our Christian culture indicates that this statement is TRUE.

Paul made it very clear (Rom 6:1) that God's immediate erasing of our sin does not mean that we should sin more, or not try and manage our sin frequency. The following bears the same meaning as Paul indicated;

The Bible says; RID (stow away, renounce) yourselves; Col 3:8 "But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips". Can you in front of God right now honestly say that you will never do any of these listed in Col 3:8? Now read Romans 7:14-20, this is Paul speaking and declaring using the 'I' (Greek 'ego') as in the first person pronoun that he, Paul, will do what he hates to do. So if Paul does what he does NOT want to do. Please note Paul is using present tense, roughly 20 years into his ministry, and not PAST tense. Then lowly me is at best in the same shoes, at best, correct? I am doing what I do not want to do, therefore choosing to do what I know I should not be doing, therefore I commit sin in the eyes of God even if I do not in my own eyes.

This is not a condemnation, just stating how God sees it. Agreed? You may be thinking didn't Jesus say to the adulterous, "go and leave your life of sin"? (John 8:11). Jesus asking us to leave the life of sin versus expecting us to never sin are oceans apart. Jesus said, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." (John 8:7) That's just a moment before Jesus asked the woman to go and leave her life of sin. Please recall what we're discussing here every time you encounter the Bible saying 'go and sin no more', in one form or another. Remember, the Lord is not setting up the bar for us to reach. It is like a coach showing basketball videos of Michael Jordan. The coach is not expecting the students to beat themselves up because they are not as good as Michael Jordan! The coach just wants them to be inspired to play their best. In the same way, the Creator is showing us perfection so that we'd humble ourselves, not to condemn or make us feel bad about it. Rather so we'd see and accept His saving GRACE, time after time after time after time.

Between Col 3:8, Romans 7:14-20 and John 8:7, do you see that the Bible says we will always sin!! Then why are we so enamored and infatuated with our, and others, sin types and sin frequency!!?? The Lord from chapter three in Genesis indicated this is who we are!! God created us with Free-Will allowing us to choose. Since choosing to NOT do good is considered sin (Jam 4:17) and we all agree that sin is sin is sin. Then therefore, since my sin will always exist, it is time that I admit and recognize its daily existence. To use my daily sins to humble myself; to keep my feet low to the ground; and to erase any hint of arrogance, self-righteousness, holier than thou air about me from existence within me. Amen? Well, how about start by doing it less and less and less, and less and less.

The chart below may bring it into perspective

Do we  
Use a  
sin scale  
today?

Sin less & Sin less → Closer Relationship



The evidence  
of a  
closer  
relationship  
Is my  
sin  
or the lack  
thereof

Let us Transform this to

Sin is  
NOT  
a scale

I am a sinner; always → God LOVES me; always



My daily  
sin is  
My constant  
reminder  
of God's  
LOVE  
daily.  
Embrace  
it

It is not at all about my sin frequency..... It is not. Self-examination is called for by Paul (1Cor 11:27-31). Our cultural experience has taught us that self-examination brings guilt and damnation, so we avoid it. But we need to re-learn that self-examination ought to bring FREEDOM, PEACE and LOVE.....

This is how I can use my daily sin as a constant reminder of;

- 1- The how fragile I am. Daily.
- 2- The knowledge of how susceptible I am. Daily.
- 3- The, I recognize there is no 'small' or 'large' sins. Daily.
- 4- The, I need to humble myself. Daily.
- 5- The AWESOMENESS of my Lord and my Creator. Daily.
- 6- The extent of LOVE that God offers me thru my sins. Daily.
- 7- The tangibility and palpability of such LOVE thru my sins. Daily.
- 8- The 'rest my head on my Makers chest', feeling. Daily.

Can you sense the PEACE filled state one would be in??

Can you sense the JOY filled state one would be in??

May this journey continue to take us in a gentle spirit and with open minds to review what it is that I, that you, that we Christians, might be doing that is causing the world to distance itself from Christianity. The goal is that we recognize, then accept, then begin, then progress slowly towards reflecting the LOVE that Jesus, God on Earth, talked about over and over and over again 😊



## Session 4 discussion:

- 1- What do we possess that the 'world' does not? (more on this next session)
- 2- What do we Christians believe we excel at? Or we're better than the 'world' at managing?
- 3- If we believe that we can manage sin better than others, and we're fully covered in salvation, which we are, then can you see how we on the inside see that we're doing pretty GOOD?  
Can this generate outward and inward superiority?
- 4- Is a small lie a sin (False testimony; non-truth)? How about sexual immorality? (Can we sum up all sexual immorality like Adultery?)
- 5- Does God classify sin types? Have we, Christians, successfully classified sin types? Gal 5:19-21, Col 3:5-11, 1Cor 6:9-10, Jam 4:17, 1John 5:17.
- 6- Have we, you and me, ever think of Jam 4:17 & 1John 5:17 as a sin? But are they to God?
- 7- If to God ALL sin is **ONE**, then why do we go after homosexuality (not even sexual immorality) so badly while ignoring Greed; Lying; Envy; Discord; Deceit; Lust; Hatred; Meanness; Gossip; Arrogance; Profanity; and many other along the same line? (2Cor 3:5-8, Gal 5:19-21, Col 3:5-8, 2Tim 3:2-5)
- 8- 1Cor 6:18 states that sexual immorality is a sin against God. Think of the list above.... They all affect 'my neighbor'. Have we decided to ignore the stuff that affects our neighbor and go after the sin against God? Like do we believe we need to protect God??
- 9- Sin + Grace = Salvation is the model we've been growing up with. The elements and the equation are correct, but has it led us to the forethought; 'The closer I get to God, the less I will sin and the closer I'll get to God. But when I sin I get farther and farther away from God?'
- 10- Will we ever not sin? Rom 7:14-20 Paul using 'I' in the first person pronoun in the present tense roughly 20 years into his ministry. Keep in mind, wrongdoing 1John 5:17 and not doing what is right Jam 4:17 are Biblically a sin. If Paul is still sinning then, will we ever not sin?

Rom 6:1 God's forgiveness does not mean we would sin on purpose .....

11- John 8:7; no one is without sin. 1 John 1:8; we'd be liars if we think we do not sin. What are we doing with sins like Col 3:8 that we commit daily?

12- If I only do the smaaaaaall sins, maybe I can ignore them and eliminate the guilt and shame associated with sin. Is that why we've classified sin?

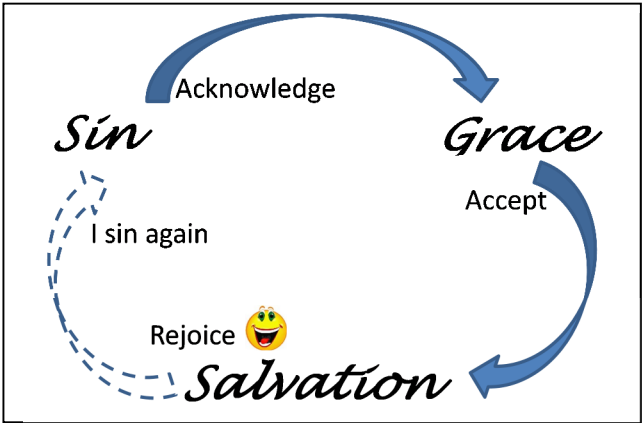
13- Again, does God classify sin?

14- Is it time to use sin as a tool to rejoice (filled with joy) in God's Grace DAILY?

15- 1Cor 11:27-31 is self-examination to result only in shame and guilt or can we continually use it to rejoice in God's GRACE and become humble, gentle, kind and unpretentious using it?

*Sin + Grace = Salvation*

Could this be the tradition we're holding onto and maybe it is time to use this;



1Cor 13:4-7 Love is patient, love is kind. It **does not** envy, it **does not** boast, it **is not** proud. It **does not** dishonor others, it **is not** self-seeking, it **is not** easily angered, it **keeps no** record of wrongs. Love **does not** delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Remember, none of this is for condemnation, guilt or shame. No.

## Session 5 How do we handle Salvation

Recap so far;

- The purpose of a Christian is to reflect Christianity
- Jesus irritated and alienated the teachers of the Jewish law.
- Christians today seem attractive to the teachers of the Christian law, while alienating non-believers as we act more like the Pharisees.
- The world does see Christians today as Arrogant & Self-righteous and therefore the world distances themselves from Christianity.
- Hope that you and I have indeed been convicted that we are acting as the world perceive us and that we need to correct our behavior.
- Christians, we, view 'sin' as something non-believers have. Christians, we, classify sin knowing full well sin is not classifiable.
- We do it so that we won't feel guilt or shame, therefore we ignore it. Meanwhile the Lord intends for us to use sin to get closer to God, to each other and get closer to those outside of our faith.
- To continue to ignore sin or not use our personal daily sin to give glory to our Creator, we will simply continue to reflect Christianity the same way we have done so far; Arrogant, Self-righteous and full of Pride.

This is the session where we talk about salvation. This is not to question it in any way or fashion rather to examine how we use it, apply it and consider it in our lives.

A quick question, do you hear much about 'the guilty does not go unpunished'? Or, 'We know where **we're** going!'

Hope that you smirked or laughed or chuckled right now, as we Christians are big on hell and punishment, or in the least we emphasize that heaven is for **us**. We are keen to point out who will get punished. Keen on telling those outside of our faith that we love them so much, we do not want to see them punished in hell. We can argue that this makes sense, but if the extent of our love is to ensure the lack of punishment, then hope you would agree that this is the least expression of love.

We Christians tell the world that we possess salvation while the rest of the world does not. This knowledge makes us feel self-righteous and express arrogance because of the benefit that this salvation affords us. We tend to talk about the effects of the lack of possession of such salvation. Therefore we dwell on punishment and hell, for if it is bad for 'them', then it must be better for 'us'. This hurts to hear out loud but contemplate it for a moment, for this is a source of self-righteousness and arrogance. It is sad that the thought of salvation could create and harbor such negative attitudes, but it does or at least can. Not because salvation is bad but rather because of how we view salvation, how we use salvation and how we talk about salvation.

The things we Christians like to point out:

- 1- God is just and therefore a just God has to inflict punishment.
- 2- The guilty will be punished.
- 3- Sinners will be judged and punished.
- 4- Non-believers are going to hell.

We Christians offer salvation to escape punishment and of course evade hell.

Here's a quick story to paint a picture. I love to grill and I am told that my steaks are all that. My wife and I invite friends over for dinner. I knew how Mike & Mel like their steaks and I have prepared the steaks to perfection. I looked at them and was just filled with joy knowing how great these steaks are. I lay them on plates and placed them in front of Mike and Mel and said;

**"Eat the steaks. You know, if you do not eat food, you will die."**

Is this statement wrong? Of course it is not, for it is indeed the truth. Will Mike and Mel be excited to check this steak out from the statement I just delivered?? **Probably not.**

But I bet they'd start drooling if I had said; "check this steak out. Look how luscious and juicy, how tender, look at them grill lines. Oh the smell, doesn't it look delicious and appetizing?"

So the options in presenting salvation or why follow Christ are;

- a) Imbed fear and explain damage to one that does NOT follow Christ, and attract with mansions, streets of gold and no-pain in heave.

OR

- b) A striking description of why one would want to follow Christ.

Hope we agree that option 'a' is the approach or the road most taken by us Christians. Do you ever wonder why we do that? Why do we lead with the damage and the harm that will ensue if one does NOT follow Christ? Or emphasize the mansions and no-pain in heaven?

Maybe it is easier to start with the opposite question. Please think about the following for a moment; If I were to ask you, "other than gaining heaven and avoiding hell, how would you describe the benefits of following Christ???"

There is a good chance you'd think; "Ehhhh, not sure what you mean?"

The reason we follow the 'if you do NOT, then you will go to hell' is probably because we believe that non-believers are like kids. They are kids in Christ and as with kids, if you want a kid NOT to do something, we tend to highlight the damages or the dreadful consequences that would arise if the kid did whatever it is we do not want them to do. One crucial thing though, in most cases we are dealing with adults not kids. We Christians talk to the world as follows;

- 1- 'you do not understand' and therefore I need to talk to you like a child.
- 2- 'we are here to save you' and therefore you just need to listen and follow.
- 3- 'let me tell you what hell is all about' and therefore you'll toe the line. You'll understand later.
- 4- If you want this candy you better do what I tell you.

Considering that this is probably what the world hears us say, do you see how the world looks at us Christians and sees arrogance on how we address them? How we treat them? And how we objectify non-believers and as kids? Doesn't that sound self-righteous!

Do you see how we come across that we are better than them?

Hope you can agree that the world is correct in seeing us as arrogant and self-righteous.

Another thing we tell the world openly;

- a- It is not me that convicts you rather it is the Spirit that convicts you
- b- My job is to seed and water but the Spirit convicts
- c- If it is not 'time' then no matter what I do, you won't be convicted

Yet, we diligently and vigilantly point out the sins(s) the world commits and expound the punishment.

Why do we do that? We point out 'their' sins so that the world would see and repent..... But isn't it the Spirit that convicts?? When we Christians say 'the Spirit convicts', we do full heartedly believe and are convinced that one can go BLUE in the face, but if the Spirit does not convict then NOTHING will happen. Nothing. Yet we chase the world, literally chase the world, going BLUE in the face pointing out 'their' sins and its consequent punishment. And as we point the finger at them, we are effectively pointing the finger **AWAY** from us .....

Hope the Spirit is convicting you of the arrogance and self-righteousness that we Christians commit in such actions/feelings/attitudes/behaviors.

You may still ask; "What arrogance are you talking about?" .....

Here's another way to see it;

When you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior and He washed you clean and made you as white as snow, have you speckled this white as snow with dirt since? Do you continue to tarnish this white as snow every day? Or have you never dirtied this white as snow since??

100% of Christians that are asked this question **MUST** by faith answer; Of course I speckle and tarnish the white as snow!! The caveat is, we will correctly add; 'but He washes me clean every time'.

The only reason the world sees us as arrogant and self-righteous, is we Christians actively flaunt the 'I am washed as white as snow' every time. Literally flaunt it, and act as if the first half of this sentence; 'of course I speckle and tarnish the white as snow' never existed. We do state "I am a sinner" ..... But basically say, "Hey... there... I said it.... Happy now?" but never OWN it. Yet sin is something that we generally admit to doing daily, but cannot identify it if asked.

Jesus put it very simply in Mat 7:3-5 and here it is paraphrased; "There is a two by four board sticking out of your head to the extent that if you turn your head it'll injure someone. Yet you walk up to your sister/brother, smack them on the back and loudly say; "Hey, idiot. Can't you see this speck of dust on your face? Don't you realize this speck of dust will mess you up??"

Somehow, we Christians say to ourselves; "What two by four man! There ain't nothing there!"

And this, my friend is turning a blind eye to your own limitations. For Jesus, God on Earth, identified this act in the previous verse as 'Judging' (Mat 7:1-2) as Jesus leads into this 'two by four' analogy. And who would judge if they did not feel holier than thou! And what does a Christian person do? He/She Judges and does it with outward arrogance and with an air of superiority on the inside; self-righteously.

I cannot say this enough, this is not to shame us Christians, not to guilt us Christians, for to shame and guilt will not produce a positive impact. Rather it is so that we recognize that we are indeed doing this, and identify it as a limitation that is hampering us. So we can start taking steps to catch ourselves feeling and thinking it, and use it to improve our actions towards the world around us, which in turn **NOT** give the world a reason to dislike Christianity before they get to know the LORD.

Some may consider the 'pointing out of the sin' is what we term seeding and watering, correct? Please, listen to Jesus' words about the plank in your eye and the sawdust in your brother's/sister's eye again and do not dismiss it. Not to stray away, but here's a quick example of what seeding and watering would look like, that I know you will agree with. (1Cor 3:7)

**Seeding.** Think of the bulb of a Tulip flower;

- 1- Do you hear about the care the person planting the bulb has to carry out in order for the tulip flower to eventually flourish?
- 2- Do you know when the bulb is planted? It is planted in the fall. Some 5-6 months before it buds.
- 3- Think of you, a Christian. Moving to a different State around fall. Yet you go out purchase and plant tulip bulbs in the yard before you move away from that house that'll no longer be yours..... That's seeding my friend

**Watering.** Think of an arid dry land;

- 1- Boy & girl scouts have a trip coming up. They will walk across one mile of arid dry land.
- 2- Their leader hands each of them a watering jug. It holds one gallon of water.
- 3- The scouts are told there may or may not be seeds under this arid surface.



- 4- As you traverse this arid dry land, wisely use your water jug as you do not know where the seeds are.
- 5- Incidentally, you'll probably never traverse this piece of land again in your life.....That's watering my friend

Let's get back to salvation and make an attempt to describe what it's like;

Imagine a beggar, destitute with absolutely nothing; homeless and hungry. He sits by the river and drinks from its stream, but hunger gets him daily. Joe passes this beggar everyday on his way to work. Joe always picks up his Starbucks in the morning, and has gotten into the habit of buying a blueberry scone, which he gives to the beggar every day that he passes him.

Can you see the beggar as this scone is given to him? Close your eyes and imagine it. Daily, the beggar satisfies a bit of his hunger with this scone. Daily he praises Joe for his kindness. Daily the beggar tells himself, "if it wasn't for Joe, I'd be so much worse off. Daily the beggar is grateful for Joe.

One morning Joe approached the beggar. The beggar noticed there was no scone in Joe's hand. Joe noticed the surprised 'where's my scone' look on the beggar's face. Joe smiled and said; "You do not understand. I won the lottery. I've setup a trust fund for you. I am here to take you to your own house stocked with food. You will never be without a roof or without food, never ever again."

The first week, the beggar would stop at least 5 times a day and express how thankful he is for Joe's generosity. The second week, it dropped from 5 times to 3 times a day. You see where this is going. A year later, Kristi, a friend of the beggar asked him, "How come you never mention Joe anymore!? Have you forgotten about what he's done for you!?"

The beggar replied to Kristi, "Of course I have not forgotten about Joe, nor that without Joe none of this would exist. But to be honest with you, when the NEED and the HUNGER are not there no more..... it is difficult to

continually give thanks when I do not sense the hunger any more. When I was begging, I felt like a beggar, and therefore my thanks came from the heart and as an immediate response to fulfilling the hunger that I felt. I never sense hunger anymore. I wish there was a way to feel the hunger so I can give heartfelt thanks every time I eat from what is continually given to me.” Kristi felt the beggar’s dilemma and said, “There must be a way, there must be a way!” And there is.

How would you describe this beggar? As ungrateful, as lazy, as misguided, as arrogant, as ‘you forgot where you came from’ (self-righteous)?

This is how we Christians are. Since our sins are wiped away it makes us think/believe/reason/assume as if we never commit sin, thus the self-righteousness felt and the arrogance we exude, are perceived by the world.

Salvation is the house the beggar’s been given.

“Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but [the Lord] said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will **boast** all the **more gladly** of **my weaknesses**, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.” 2Cor 12:8-9

When was the last time you or I boasted about our weaknesses, or more appropriately about our sins??

We are given the tool to remind ourselves of the hunger and the need. Sadly we do not want to feel as hungry or needy, because it hurts as it reminds us of our weaknesses, so we **IGNORE** the actual presence of sin in our daily life.

The question is, “Do we need to feel guilty because of our sin?” The answer is **‘No’** because the freedom we are afforded thru GRACE supersedes any guilt.

Then how do we reconcile this?

Next session we'll discuss; how the Joy from Grace is bigger than the guilt from sin!!

Salvation is the gift that our Lord and Savior has made available to us to use daily. Let's not acknowledge it on celebrations or festivities only nor use it as 'answers' to questions. It's like we take salvation, a precious gift, stow it in a drawer and every once in while open the drawer, look at it, admire it, be thankful for having it, then close the drawer on it again. You may have heard this before; a man received a Monte Blanc Pen as a gift. He googled it and it was \$450. I would not use that pen, would you?? That's exactly what the man did. Whenever someone visited, he'd pull the pen out and show it off, and of course everyone would be wowed. Then one time as he was showing it, the guest said, "how much is the ink replacement?" The man looked puzzled and frustrated at the question and said, "I never needed replacing it. You do not write with a pen like that." The guest's response was, "I thought a purpose of a pen is to write with it. Without writing with it, it really has no value!" Don't render salvation to be of no value.

Let me and you **NOT** be like the beggar lost on how to remind himself of the free gift he received. Unlike the beggar, you and I have 'sin' in our daily life to use maybe 100 times a day to be filled with the gratitude for the house we've been freely given. Let's not ignore our daily 'sin' for it is through that sin that we can rejoice for the salvation that our Creator has made available to us, 100 times a day; 100 times a day, and live in constant gratitude. Now, that will make one feel special 😊 and filled with PEACE and JOY.

May this journey continue to take us in a gentle spirit and with open minds to review what it is that I, that you, that we Christians, might be doing that is causing the world to distance itself from Christianity. The goal is that we recognize, then accept, then begin, then progress slowly towards reflecting the LOVE that Jesus, God on Earth, talked about over and over and over again 😊

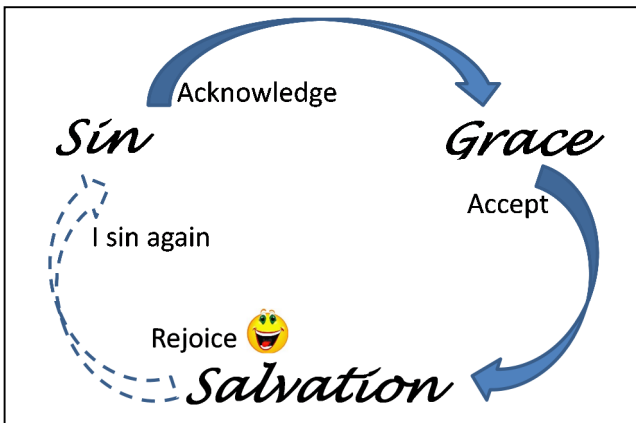
Session 5 discussion:

- 1- What do we possess that the 'world' does not?
- 2- "Don't stick your finger in the fire or else." "I've got the candy; if you want it follow what I say." Would these be considered condescending when presented to adults? Is it pompous? Is this what we typically do?
- 3- Mat 7:3-5; how do we reconcile the 2by4 in our head versus I am washed white as snow? Which one of these two do we talk about the most?
- 4- What is it that we possess to be white as snow?  
DO we flaunting Salvation?
- 5- Recall the Mont Blanc pen story? Does it describe how we showcase salvation, but are we using it?
- 6- What do you mean how are we using Salvation?

$$\text{Sin} + \text{Grace} = \text{Salvation}$$

In this model, salvation is an outcome,

but in the following model;



Salvation is the SOURCE of  
REJOICING  
JOY  
DELIGHT  
Elation

7- God uses GRACE, a method, so I'd have salvation. Is GRACE continual?  
Then is Salvation continual?

8- Do we, like the story of the beggar with his house, are unable to find ways to continually be from the gut thankful for the gift we've been given?

Do you now see how sin and salvation can be used for continual rejoicing?

9- If salvation is a free gift, am I keeping it wrapped and stowed in the closet? Or should I unwrap it and use it in my daily life?

We've been taught to hold up salvation as a prize. Could this be a tradition we're holding onto? We did not earn it, therefore it is not a prize!

1Cor 13:4-7 Love is patient, love is kind. It **does not** envy, it **does not** boast, it **is not** proud. It **does not** dishonor others, it **is not** self-seeking, it **is not** easily angered, it **keeps no** record of wrongs. Love **does not** delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Remember, none of this is for condemnation, guilt or shame. No.

## Session 6 Joy from Grace replacing the Guilt of Sin

Recap so far;

- The purpose of a Christian is to reflect Christianity
- Jesus irritated and alienated the teachers of the Jewish law.
- Christians today seem attractive to the teachers of the Christian law, while alienating non-believers as we act more like the Pharisees.
- The world does see Christians today as Arrogant & Self-righteous; therefore the world distances itself from Christianity.
- Hope that you and I have indeed been convicted that we are acting as the world perceives us and that we need to correct our behavior.
- Christians, we, view 'sin' as something non-believers have. Christians, we, classify sin knowing full well sin is not classifiable.
- We do it so that we won't feel guilt or shame, therefore we ignore it. Meanwhile the Lord intends for us to use sin to get closer to God, closer to each other and get closer to those outside of our faith.
- To continue to ignore sin or not use our personal daily sin to give glory to our Creator, we will simply continue to reflect Christianity the same way we have done so far; Arrogant, Self-righteous and full of Pride.
- Salvation is a free gift. We believe it but like a gift we've received in the past, we put it in a drawer and pull it out only to show it off.
- Hope we now know how to use it on a daily basis.

In session 4 (Pg. 24) we looked at Col 3:8, Romans 7:14-20 and John 8:7 in detail to illustrate that God knows that we will sin and we need to accept that we are continually sinning, as in daily. We saw Paul some 20 years into his ministry talking about himself as doing the things he hates to do as admission of his own continual sin. With all that in mind, let's list some questions about our beliefs;

- 1- Does God ever expect one to be sinless? Note that if a person is sinless then that person is perfect!

The answer is God NEVER expects one to be PERFECT. Correct?

- 2- Why does God NEVER expect that? Please do not get caught up in the **WHY** we stray, for the question is **WILL** we stray. You know the answer; God created us and the Bible clearly says that it is human to stray, and we have to work hard not to stray with God's FULL KNOWLEDGE that we **NEVER** will be perfect. Correct?  
I hope you said yes. If still not sure, I hope next points will help.
- 3- Do most Christians commit the BIG sins.....? (Worship a statue, Misuse God's name, Murder, Steal, Adultery openly, Lie at Court, Covet in plain sight). Typically most Christians stay at bay from the BIG ones, and if they commit them, they're like here and there not continually. Correct?
- 4- So are we Christians **SINLESS** most of the time!?  
If you're thinking 'MAYBE' then you know better than GOD, which we know is not true. Therefore, as the Bible says, we are continually sinful. Correct? (see first paragraph in this session for references)  
I hope you said Yes.

If you said no, then you do believe you have sinned in the past, prior to salvation, but no longer commit **ANY** sin..... I hope you've rethought this position and agree that you and I do and will commit acts **considered by GOD** as sin..... daily.

- 5- So what is it that we are continually sinful of!? Be patient through this list please. Hope you agree that the upcoming list is the truth that we keep ignoring, because it is hard to face..... Because to fight the sinful nature is indeeeeeeeeeeeeee HARD, and not feeling the grind fighting it **EQUALS** not doing anything about it or better yet ignoring it. Let's see some of these SINS that we ignore, shrug our shoulders at or not stress about; (Rom 1:28-32, 2Cor 12:20-21, Gal 5:19-21, Eph 4:30-32, Col 3:5-8, 2Tim 3:2-5)

- Greed;** Typically affects another negatively..... Therefore breaks God’s Command
  - Lying;** Typically affects another negatively..... Therefore breaks God’s Command
  - Envy;** Typically affects another negatively..... Therefore breaks God’s Command
  - Discord;** Typically affects another negatively..... Therefore breaks God’s Command
  - Deceit;** Typically affects another negatively..... Therefore breaks God’s Command
  - Hatred;** Typically affects another negatively..... Therefore breaks God’s Command
  - Meanness;** Typically affects another negatively..... Therefore breaks God’s Command
  - Gossip;** Typically affects another negatively..... Therefore breaks God’s Command
  - Arrogance;** Typically affects another negatively..... Therefore breaks God’s Command
  - Self-righteousness;** Typically affects another negatively..... Therefore breaks God’s Command
- and the LIST goes on and on**

If you are still not sure please read Paul’s self-confession with ongoing sin in his life; Romans 7:21-25. It is simply his and our REALITY. Every ‘I’ stated in these verses is ‘I’ (Greek ‘ego’) used in the first person pronoun by Paul.

You are either convicted that indeed these are mine and your daily sins that we have to FIGHT and do a WHOLE lot better at or you have shrugged your shoulders and ready to close this book and go about your daily business. I hope you are convicted and start to monitor and self-examine these actions and work hard on reducing them day in and day out while knowing full well



that such sins will not disappear, yet be **grateful** daily for the salvation that washes them away. (To show gratitude is action... To give thanks is words)

ACCEPTANCE of this simple fact; 'such sins will never fully disappear', is actually **YOUR FUEL** to keep going at them and not GIVE UP on continually trying to keep them under control. These are mine and your daily sins.

It is this knowledge indeed that will ensure that we are, or better yet, THAT I AM NEVER ARROGANT about OTHER'S sinful nature as I am FULLY AWARE of, or better yet CONSTANTLY BATTLING and DEALING WITH MY OWN sinful nature.

Humility will overcome Arrogance                      Humility will overcome Self-righteousness                      Humility will overcome HYPOCRISY.

So you see, it is not about how much or how less sin is in my life (James 2:10) ..... It is not..... Rather it is which sin(s) that I am focused on..... Which types of sin that when I focus on make me ARROGANT and Self-righteous..... And which types of sin that when I am focused on make me HUMBLE..... make me MEEK..... make me GENTLE?

### **HUMBLE ME OH LORD IN YOUR PRESENCE**

Sin is out there, always have been there and always will be there. It is time to use sin to bring me closer to God. It is time to STOP using sin to distance me from my fellow human being. It is time to STOP allowing sin to distance me from God or shame me away from the Lord. There is no room for a wall between me and the Creator.

Did you know there is a \$1,000 dollar bill? There is. I imagine myself walking by and spot a \$1,000 dollar bill on the street. I will probably look around see if anyone else noticed it. No one did, Great. I slyly pick it up, pocket it and

walk away, and on the inside I'll be so giggly and think to myself; "I got away with it, I got away with it."

We Christians tend to be like that with our daily sin(s); the sin(s) that we typically ignore or shrug our shoulders at.

Question; how will I combat such sin(s) without depressing myself!?

**Step ONE;** is to acknowledge the sins as they occur

Let's pick gossip as an example. I am guilty of gossiping about others with Tammy. I would think you have someone in your life you do the same with. I think we are all guilty of that. So I'm in the middle of talking to Tammy about Don and how I heard from someone that Don snorts when he eats his food. "Honey, can you believe it, I heard that Don has been....."

You are probably thinking I will say; "Tammy then should remind me that I should not gossip," correct?

Nope, not correct. Why? Because it would be no different than what we Christians do today; point to others their sinful nature. Rather it has to be me that notice my own sinful nature. So, as I am telling her the story, midstream, I would STOP. "Honey, I should not have started this. I am working on controlling my gossip. Sorry for keeping you in suspense, but I won't finish." Tammy will probably be like; "Come on now. You gotta finish telling me about Don." And I will have to resist my own temptation to finish.

The next day, I am driving back from work, and I've had a tough day or at least in my mind feel like I have had a tough day. Eating for me is a venting mechanism. On the way home, I pick up a sandwich, a bag of chips and a chocolate bar. The time to my house is quite short, so I wolf everything down quickly. I wipe my face and make sure there are no crumbs on my shirt. I walk in and my wife says, "Glad you are home. I am starving." And the

following words come out of my mouth; “I am starving too honey.... wanna go to Dewey’s?”

So I have just lied, and about to commit gluttony..... yet there is not a drop of sweat on my brow. I have pulled it off without a hitch. Not a thought in my mind. Not a single thought. Not a “Reda, why are you doing this?” NONE my friend. NONE.

Do I have the guts to tell my wife, as we are enjoying the beautifully delicious pizza, “Honey, I have lied to you.” Yes, that’s what I am talking about. Shed the pretense. Come clean. Yes, on something so trivial..... something we may term a white lie..... or a ‘little’ white lie

If you think I am going too far with this example, then I suggest that you please turn the pages back to the beginning and start from session one again, for this is not in the least ‘too far’ rather just the beginning.

YES it is VERY HARD WORK. YES it will probably make people around me frown at me, maybe even not want to be in my company. This, my friend, is **“not being part of the world.”** (John 15:19, Mat 16:26)

For what is the gospel that we are preaching to the world if it is not the HOW to LOVE one another, and what is LOVE? Love is Kind..... 1Cor 13:4-7 Did you notice that after ‘patient’ and ‘kind’, the **SEVEN** actions after that are ‘is not...’, ‘does not...’, ‘is not...’ Does that ring a bell in what we’ve been discussing?? That, in order to LOVE, in order to emulate the LORD, there are more **‘NOT TO’** actions, than **‘TO’** actions?? This is to reiterate that to be Like Jesus includes a whole lot **‘NOT TO’** actions..... a whole lot.

Hope this is convicting you. Here are the verses of ‘Love is...’ for reference

1Cor 13:4-7 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but

rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

HOW does one become like that? With such LOVE towards others?? Remember where we started! We have 'FAILED' and continue to FAIL to be 'Like Jesus' by trying **TO DO** this or **TO DO** that.

So what do we have to do?

Instead of continually trying to do... fill in the blanks... Rather we have to **NOT DO....**, or decrease doing some things; Little by little by little cut back and cut back on;

Lying

Envy

Gossip

Discord

Greed

Hatred

Deceit

Meanness

Arrogance

Self-righteousness

Pride

And of course keep adding more and more to the list.....

And that's how we attract the world to the LORD.

Talking about the Lord, let us consider the following about some of God's characteristics that we see in the Bible;

God has JEALOUSY ANGER WRATH HATE, it is in the Bible..... But God is perfect, correct? Meaning God keeps all these characteristics in check. The Lord expresses LOVE by not using or inhibiting such characteristics such

as Jealousy, Hate, Anger and Wrath. (Ex 20:5, Mal 1:3, Deut 32:16, Num 16:46)

We, the people, are made in God's image but we are not perfect, for a picture (image) can have a blemish or defect but the original does not. Therefore, we will never be able to completely cut out Greed, lying.....  
But we can strive to limit such characteristics from exhibiting against others. Don't you think this process applies in the "imitate or reflect God" model? Think about it.....! (3John 1:11)

Cutting such characteristics further back and further back, will allow us to reflect the Creator more and more, and the world will not fly away from Christianity rather will flock to the MAKER.

So is this it then?

Nope, that was Step One; to acknowledge the sins as they occur

**Step two**; combating sin(s) without depressing myself! (Step one was P.41)

Let's go back to the example of me lying and committing gluttony. Remember how I should have come clean to my wife after I lied? Well, the second step is how I handle the conversation with the Lord about this situation, after I had come clean with her.

The PURPOSE is to learn how to transform the **shame and guilt** of sin to the **glory and joy** of GRACE.

Acknowledging continual sin such as Deceit, Meanness, Gossip..... can break a person down. The shame and the guilt beats you down over and over again, it is debilitating..... That's why we typically ignore it or dismiss it!

So how does one make it not debilitating and not guilt ridden?

Typically, when I am feeling the pain of repetitive sin, I do go to the Lord broken. I ask for forgiveness but mostly say things like; "I do not know how

You Lord can even be here listening to a sinner like me, when I keep doing the same thing over and over. I know you forgive me but I do not understand how You keep doing it, as I do not deserve it. Am I ever going to stop this? Or is my weakness an everlasting thing? I have failed You again my Creator.”

There could be tears during this prayer. I hope that you are identifying with this or see the ‘beaten down’ spirit within.

This eventually wears one down. The guilt and the shame grow exponentially over time. It is debilitating because the emphasis or the focus of my prayer is on the sin and how terrible I am for doing it. So how about if we do confess the sin, and ask for forgiveness but then turn into praising the Lord for the method of forgiveness; GRACE. So it goes something like this;

“Here I am my Lord as I have lied yet again. I know You are expecting me here and holding me up. As I am here asking for forgiveness, I know You have already forgiven me, already wiped it clean my Creator. How amazing is Your GRACE and I am fully thankful and grateful to feel this GRACE of Yours, this amazing Love that You continually afford me. This will probably happen again, and I will be here in this same spot again, but I will do my best to do it less and less, my most Wonderful Lord.”

Do you feel the positive energy, the PEACE and the JOY in the redemption?

My prayer is my words of THANKSGIVING and then I can find a way to show my GRATITUDE to my LORD and SAVIOR.

In this same manner, we can bring the attractiveness of Christianity to the forefront.

Remember the luscious steak? How rather than saying “eat else you will die”, we should describe the aromatic smell, the beautiful grill lines, the tenderness of the steak, and so on? So let us NOT talk about Christianity in

terms of avoiding hell or gaining heaven. Let us talk about Christianity in an attractive and exciting way.

Like how? Here's simply one way..... There are many more.....

- 1- Christianity teaches one how to be humble
- 2- Humility allows understanding of our human characteristics
- 3- Understanding paves the road to monitoring and disciplining of such characteristics
- 4- Monitoring proves that I am in constant misbehavior (sin)
- 5- My sin, in light of God's love, allows us to experience the JOY of being forgiven (GRACE)  
Sin is no longer a bad word, rather a fact that we accept, for it is indeed real, and we work on minimizing
- 6- Constant sin equals constant forgiveness equals continual experiencing of the Lord's GRACE. ACTUAL CONTINUAL EXPERIENCE of God's GRACE.
- 7- Experiencing Grace will fill me with PEACE
- 8- In God, with Joy and Peace, my relationship with the Lord GROWS and MATURES CONTINUALLY.

**It works if you work it, so work it** (I borrowed that phrase 😊 I love it)

I know I know, this list sounds identical to what is presently being prescribed at church, correct?

There is only one problem, so far, and we are in the year 2018, my sin recognized by me brings me shame, guilt, humiliation and indignation, and we actually indicate that such feelings are what will deter me from sinning again..... Have these feelings made me or you deter from the daily sins that we've discussed?? Nope.

Therefore, items 1-8 above are nothing more than a wish list. Talking about them does not make them a reality.

The application of the principles listed in this study will make them a reality.  
It will take time, but it will become reality.

It works

If you work it

So work it

Practice makes Perfect..... Wait a minute..... Perfect?

Never Perfect, correct?..... But does that mean Do Not Practice?

*It works*

*If you work it*

*So work it*

*And may God Equip*



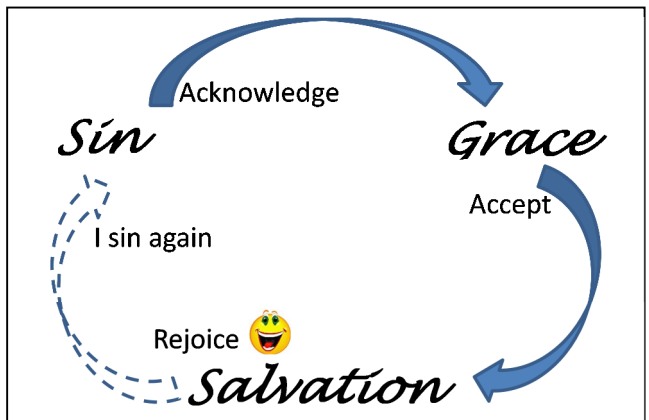
Session 6 discussion:

- 1- A recovered heroin user or an ex-gang member give a talk about how God's Grace saved them and snatched them from that life. How many in the church, or you, would say, "I wish I had a testimony like that?"
- 2- Why are such speakers so effective? Is it their conviction expressed in their JOY knowing what GRACE God provided them?
- 3- Do they get more GRACE or a different GRACE than what I get?
- 4- Then why don't I feel the rejoicing and the joy like they do?
- 5- Is it because their sin is BIG while mine is smaaall or non-existent?  
But in God's eyes their BIG sin is the same measure as my tiny sin, then my ignoring or labeling or classifying sin has caused me to miss out on the rejoicing, the joy, the elation and jubilation of GRACE!
- 6- So what are these smaaall and tiny and DAILY sins? Rom 1:28-32, 2Cor 12:20-21, Gal 5:19-21, Eph 4:30-32, Col 3:5-8, 2Tim 3:2-5  
Greed; Lying; Envy; Discord; Deceit; Lust; Hatred; Meanness; Gossip; Arrogance; Profanity; and many other along the same line.
- 7- How do these sins make me feel now if I recall them?
- 8- Is our God of love a God of shame and guilt? Is this another tradition that we're holding onto?

*Sin + Grace = Salvation*

This linear model creates the shame and guilt, because salvation is viewed as an end result.

This cyclical model allows for the recognition that continual GRACE & salvation are the source for rejoicing.



9- Like the recovered heroin addict, do we talk about our daily sin from the roof tops as they do? Why not? Be honest.

10- Does my fear of how others will think of me supersede my desire to share God's GRACE and give GLORY to the Lord?

11- But what if we all did it? Someone has to start 😊

Can you envision, imagine or conceive of the overwhelming joy, delight and jubilee that would spread around?

How about the air of humility, gentleness and unpretentiousness that would exude from such a community?

Can you practice transforming the guilt and shame to the joy of GRACE and the GLORY to the Lord for salvation?

Does not mean sin more! But it does mean that you recognize that the Lord forgives each and every time. So REJOICE in this forgiveness, BATHE in this GRACE and DWELL in this salvation.

*It works    If you work it    So work it  
and may God equip*

1Cor 13:4-7 Love is patient, love is kind. It **does not** envy, it **does not** boast, it **is not** proud. It **does not** dishonor others, it **is not** self-seeking, it **is not** easily angered, it **keeps no** record of wrongs. Love **does not** delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Remember, none of this is for condemnation, guilt or shame. No.

## Session 7 God's Called me to

The solution to all this is very simple actually. It lies in the most common thing that we Christians strive for.... The phrase we commonly use;

“You need to find God’s calling for you, for your life.”

We truly believe that once a person finds their ‘Calling’ they’ll be the happiest person on Earth. Why? Because they are doing God’s will and that in turn will fill you with PEACE and JOY.

‘God’s Calling for my life’ is typically associated with decisions at crossroads. What line of work do I do? Should I marry this person? Should I move to a different state or country? And so on.

Let us agree that most people struggle with answers to such questions for they are not sure what God’s calling is? They have not ‘received’ a clear answer or a clear CALL. We pray, like praaaaay. We ask others to pray for us.

Pray for what specifically?

The answer is; “For God to make it clear to me which way to choose.”

In most cases one does not receive a ‘sign’ or a ‘message’ or a ‘communique’. Rather we make a choice, and see how things unfold in the path we’ve chosen. If favorable, we claim that indeed I heard God correctly in my decision! If unfavorable, we wonder why God let me go down that path!

This is not to challenge the process of finding God’s calling for me or for you. Rather, it is to delve into our emotions and how we handle this mega important thing we characterize as “GOD’S CALLING FOR ME”, and to establish that we do indeed, many a time, find it elusive! Don’t you agree?

But wait a minute, why would our **LOVING GIVING MERCIFUL  
COMPASSIONATE KIND GENEROUS FORGIVING** Creator and Lord be elusive??

The 'Calling' is like a beacon, isn't it? Then if God told us over and over again that the 'light' is to be on the lamp stand for all to see, and that the 'city' needs to be on the top of the mountain for all to notice. Then why would the Lord be elusive on 'the Calling' for you and for me??

There is one important thing. We typically think that God's calling for me is different from God's calling for you. Not sure why that is? But you do know what I am talking about, correct? I guess we do assert individuality in much of what we do in our culture and that could, just maybe, could be the reason.

Is there something wrong with God's calling to you and me, to her, him and them, to be the same exact thing?? That would appear to be too simple, right? What if it is, what if the elusiveness stems from me looking for 'MY' calling, and you looking for 'YOUR' calling?? If it is, then it is no longer elusiveness from the Lord, but a short sightedness on my or your part. Correct!?

We need to STOP for a second and consider the thought that God is not elusive, maybe it is me that is unable to see the **WRITING ON THE WALL.....** Cannot see it, over and over, and over again

Maybe it is easier to visualize this through the following scenario so as to demonstrate this 'writing on the wall'. Here goes. I am ticked off at one of my employees. I tell my trusted friend at work that I will walk over to the employee's cubicle to read them the riot act. As I start walking down the hall, my friend is walking next to me and talking to me. I can tell that he is pleading for something from the tone of his voice but I am not prepared to listen or entertain anything he has to say. I march down the hall, and he continues to plead with me, of course to no avail. I get to the employee's cubicle and do the deed.

Two weeks later I found out that I completely missed the mark with that employee and was not in the least fair in what I did. Then I scream out loud; “Why didn’t anyone stooooopppppp meeeeeee.....?”

If God’s Calling is so simple and the writing is all over the wall, then what is it? Why have I not noticed it?

“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of **the calling to which you have been called**, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Eph 4:1-3

So what did God call me, call you, call us to?????

Please, once you start reading the following, do not be dismissive ..... please. For God is very clear about this. This is **God’s CALLING** to you and to me, to her, him and them;

GOD IS LOVE and has called us to:

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

We know LOVE is ACTION

Other than PATIENT & KIND, what is LOVE?

LOVE is ‘**NOT TO.....**’ and ‘**Does NOT.....**’

**Greed; Lying; Envy; Discord; Deceit; Hatred; Meanness; Gossip; Arrogance; Self-righteousness; don’t stop..... Keep adding to the LIST.....**

These are tough things to STOP, aren’t they?? Yes they are!

A calling many a time requires sacrifice, correct? There is much sacrifice for me and for you to ‘**NOT TO.....**’ Again, it is VERY HAAAAARD WORK.

Is God asking for too much here??

These may seem a bit much to do but with hard work we'll chip at them

Is the Lord asking for hard work?

Always

Disciplining oneself on these and self-control are a lifelong process. (2Tim 1:7, 2Pet 1:6)

Then let's start practicing the '**NOT TO.....**' Let us Christians STOP or minimize incorporating these characteristics in our lives, for every time we are not trying, then we are indeed IGNORING GOD. Even slapping the Lord on the face. Every time.

But let the recognition of each time I sin lead me to rejoice in God's GRACE in forgiving it and stay far, far away from allowing any guilt or shame to crawl between me and my Lord. Between me and my Creator who exemplifies LOVE.

Can you see Christians reflecting the Lord in this light as LOVING JOYFUL PEACEFUL individuals??

You may think, "We cannot all be such happy people!"

But it is indeed so, as one decreases the characteristics listed, we automatically become more at PEACE internally, and it will reflect and even become infectious; infecting others with the **JOY of internal PEACE**.

Do you remember the '**FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**' Don't you want **THEM??** Gal 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." It is not having one and some of them..... They are ALL the FRUIT of the SPIRIT, they are ALL ONE FRUIT of the LORD. Jesus speaks clearly of how the only way you and I can bear FRUIT is when we are in Him, with Him,

of Him (John 15:4-5) so let's desire, yearn, hunger and crave to be ALL of the FRUIT of the SPIRIT. Not just one or two, but ALL of the fruit of the SPIRIT; Love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

These characteristics, love, joy, peace ... are not measurable, and therefore very subjective and very difficult to assess. On the other hand, the lying, greed, envy, meanness..... are things I know that I do and therefore **Extremely measurable**. As I monitor and decrease them, guess what..... The unmeasurable attributes of the Fruit of the Spirit will INCREASE & INCREASE.

Can you see Christians reflecting the Lord in this light as LOVING JOYFUL PEACEFUL individuals?? That's when the world will want to flock to become closer to the one true MAKER, as the Creator's spirit fills the created with JOY PEACE & LOVE. Amen?

As we decrease and decrease our quote "small" unquote daily sins, we will be clothing ourselves with..... Col 3:12;

To clothe, to put on, to cloak, to dress yourself, to wear on top of your natural skin the attributes of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. It means that no, we are not necessarily born as such in our own skin, but we Christians are to clothe, put on such characteristics so much so, that the observer, the world would never see, feel or notice anything but what we daily CHOOSE to wear 😊

Session 7 discussion:

- 1- “Thy will be done on Earth....” Who does that benefit?  
Me, God or Others?
- 2- Am I wondering what God’s calling me to do? Why?  
Is it because I truly believe that doing what God wants me to do will fill me with Joy and with Peace? The Lord’s Joy and Peace!
- 3- If we’re honest, most are not sure what God wants them to do. Is God, the loving compassionate God being elusive? Or is God clear but I keep saying, “It can’t be that. It can’t be that simple. What am I missing?”
- 4- If God’s #1 command is Love one another, why is it that I keep searching for what God wants **‘ME’** to do!?
- 5- Eph 4:1-3 What is Paul asking, begging, imploring, petitioning you and me to do? Is ‘love’ the subscription, method, and manner?
- 6- Col 3:8-9 lists the issues, then Col 3:12-13 lists the methods, but how do you apply these methods? Col 3:14; ... and beyond all.... ‘AGAPE’
- 7- 1 Cor 13:4-7 ‘AGAPE’ definition is what? Other than patient and kind, how many “Agape does not” and “Agape is not” are there??? (8)
- 8- Is my ‘calling’ to AGAPE, as described above, everyone else?? Isn’t there that thing about AGAPE is how God loves me? So am I to love others as God loves me!?  
A calling is associated with sacrifice. Love at its highest includes sacrifice. So am I to sacrifice self? Why? Is it to gain this PEACE and JOY?
- 9- What does this JOY and PEACE look like to others? Will it manifest itself?  
Gal 5:22-23

Can you imagine when the world sees us, Christians, as described above!!

It is not having one or two of these characteristics, they all manifest together

Col 3:12 “put on”, “clothe” ..... It is a CHOICE..... and may God equip you

*It works                      if you work it                      so work it*



## Want more!

Once we work on reducing what the world sees as our limitations; Arrogance (outward) and Self-righteousness (inward) then we can look at the limitations that we Christians see that we now have..... Like what, you ask!

How about how we complain about ourselves, Christians, as people that are Not-Motivated and with No-Follow-Thru..... Think about it! Do you feel a conviction? That these are two characteristics that we see in ourselves and our churches today? If you think so and are asking what is the answer?

Yeap, you've guessed it..... By monitoring and decreasing and decreasing the "**NOT TO**....." characteristics of LOVE, inadvertently the FRUIT of the SPIRIT abounds, and with God's will alongside us, you and I will improve so much and continue improving on these Not-Motivated and No-Follow-Thru and leave them by the wayside 😊

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Notes:



What is this book about?

Take me for example; my doctor says I am developing diabetes. Basically told me that if I start eating healthy and exercise, then I can avert the progression of what I have and there is a very good chance that I would keep the diabetes at bay. Or, I can start a daily medicine regiment and not worry too much about what I eat or exercising. Either way the diabetes is lingering there.

So in reality I have a choice; I can live my life as I have been living it. Not change anything, and I am still good. Why? For I have the medicine..... I will go out and pretty much eat what I want. Take my medicine and act as if I am cured..... but am I?? Hope you agree with me when I say, “No I am not. Absolutely not, not even one bit!” But I am acting as if I am.

But wait a minute..... why did I not choose the exercise and healthy eating?? Well, it is too much work..... The diabetes will always linger there and besides..... have you forgotten..... I’ve got the MEDICINE.

So us Christians behave in the same way. We have sin in our lives but we have salvation, so we do not bother with the healthy eating and exercising. It is too much work to do that..... and besides, we have the medicine.....we Christians have the cure..... there is no need to monitor, to improve, to exercise or to eat healthy.

And that is how the world sees us Christians, and of course the world thinks that’s how Christianity is. We are giving Jesus a bad rap.

If you are honest with yourself, and see the relevance of this example, this book is a discussion and hopefully a process through which you and I may choose the healthy eating and exercising in our journey of faith, so that we would indeed reflect Christianity and we would give Jesus a good representation and not a bad one.

Designed as a Bible Study to examine how we presently carry out our Christianity and how we can carry it out.