



BOOK



BASIC DOCTRINES

LEADER'S GUIDE

GLC  ESSENTIALS

BOOK 6: BASIC DOCTRINES LEADER'S GUIDE

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IMPORTANT NOTE

This **Leader's Guide** contains teaching explanations inside parentheses that guide and help the discussion leader elaborate on each point in the EXAMINE section of this lesson.

The goal is not to parrot the explanations but to **study, reflect** and **express these directly and clearly** as you lead the discussion in your small group.

You have the option to add related illustrations or statements for further clarification. However, deviating from the outline or adding major points is not encouraged, to ensure transferability of the lesson to your Dgroup members who are expected to teach the same things to their future or current disciples, as well as to limit the time devoted for each lesson.

SESSION 1
GOD'S WORD
THE BIBLE

EXPLORE

Discover the WORD

In your group, find the names of the Bible books in the puzzle sheet below.

HIDDEN BIBLE BOOK NAMES:

Can you find 56 books of the Bible in this paragraph? Highlight the word, like the sample given –“luke” in the 3rd sentence of the first paragraph.

The following article contains the names of all the books of the Bible hidden within the words. See if you can find them all! I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible. It was a lulu, kept some people looking so hard for facts. And for others it was revelation. Some were in a jam. Especially since the names of the books were not capitalized. But the truth finally struck home to numbers of readers. To others, it was a real job. We want it to be a most fascinating few moments to you. Do these while you're watching TV, sitting on the john, eating tuna, humming your favorite reggae tune-- a song of Sol, "O Mon, I believe you!"

Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help them. I will quickly admit it usually takes a minister to find one of them, and there will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. There are those among us who might need music – a banjo, electric guitar, or drums! See how well you can compete. Relax now, listen to Genesis on the radio, or play your banjo! Nah, just concentrate on the task at hand. Find them all and be a pro! Verbs and subjects don't always agree in this article, but don't let that stand in your way!

I even asked for help from my ex. “O, Du!” she said. I replied, “Corinth, I answer your questions,” but she said, “Come back at Ramadan.” I eloquently thanked her. Frustrated, she said, “The puzzle is a ... I ... ah.. I don’t find these EZ. Ek! I elect not to do them!” I thought about offering her a juju decoration or perhaps alms, but decided not to pursue it. This just about chronicles our relationship.

Some of the hardest books to hide were Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Samuel, Nehemiah, Ecclesiastes, Jeremiah, Obadiah, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Timothy, and Philemon. Remember that ten of the names are duplicated like First and Second Thessalonians, so you will only find fifty-six distinct names.

This puzzle is not EZ – rather, it is quite difficult. It would be simpler if the books were in a list that you could pick from. Answer can be anywhere in this article, so that makes this format the worst! Do your best and God bless!

LEARNING NUGGET

The Bible has 66 books — 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. How well do you know what is taught in these books? We may have our “favorite” books and some we overlook because they are harder to understand and apply. However, if we truly believe that the Bible is God’s Word to us, then we will diligently read, study, memorize and apply all that the Bible teaches us to do and avoid what it tells us not to do. As we do, we will know Jesus more and we will be transformed into His likeness more and more.

WHY STUDY DOCTRINES?

What we believe about God influences everything in our lives. If we don't understand doctrine well, we can be misled.

Theology is simply the study of God; even if it is impossible to fully understand God, as believers in Christ our deepest desire is to grow in love and knowledge of Him.

And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

Matthew 22:37

To love God, we need to know Him.

(That includes with our mind. Love and knowledge go together, so the more we know God, the more we will learn to appreciate Him and learn to love Him even more.)

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Challenges to the Bible *(many people today do not accept that the Bible is the Word of God)*

- "Whatever you believe is OK for you"
(no absolute truth or moral absolutes)
- Authority cannot be trusted.
(parents, church, Bible, government are rejected, rebelled against, not respected)

-
- The Bible is full of errors and contradictions
(“Old Testament God is a wrathful, vengeful, judgmental God, not like the God in the New Testament—so are there two different gods?”)
 - The Bible isn’t relevant today
(“The Bible was written in an agricultural society, how can that relevant be in a technology-driven world such as ours today?”)

Discussion 1

Describe a typical objection to the authority of the Bible that you have heard.

How did you respond?

What do you wish you would have known so that you could have responded better?

Our Statement of Faith about the Bible

We believe that the Bible, composed of 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books, is the Word of God, supernaturally inspired, inerrant in its original form, infallible, so that it is our supreme authority in all matters of faith, doctrine and conduct.

1. The Bible claims to be authoritative because it is God’s Word.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

II Timothy 3:16,17

Inspiration is the work of the Holy Spirit to guide the authors of the Bible to compose and record in words, without error, God's revelation to man.

For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased”— ¹⁸and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. ²⁰But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, ²¹for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

II Peter 1:16-21

The words, “Thus saith the Lord” or “God said...” are found more than 1900 times in the Bible!

Discussion 2

What do you understand Paul to mean when he says, “all scripture is inspired by God?”

How do these passages clarify the meaning of inspiration? Why is this important?

2. The Bible's claims are supported:

a. Internally

Fulfilled prophecy

Over 300 prophecies on the life of Jesus alone have been fulfilled in the New Testament.

(Peter Stoner in his book "Science Speaks" calculated the chance of just 8 of the 300 prophecies concerning Jesus being fulfilled by one person is 1 in 10^{17} which is to say, practically zero chance of it occurring by random. Statistically, this means that it was humanly impossible for anyone to fulfill all these prophecies. Only God could possibly make this happen.

Examples of prophecies about Jesus that were fulfilled:

- *be born in Bethlehem: 2.8×10^5 chance of being fulfilled*
- *will enter Jerusalem riding on a donkey: maybe 1 in 100 kings*
- *will be betrayed by a friend and suffer wounds in his hands: 1 in 1,000 people*
- *will be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver: 1 in 1,000*
- *betrayal money be used to buy a potter's field: 1 in 1,000*
- *will remain silent while being afflicted: 1 in 1,000*
- *will die by having his hands and feet pierced: 1 in 10,000)*

Jesus' use of the Bible

(Quoting from the Old Testament)

But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the burning bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. ³⁸Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to Him.”

Luke 20:37-38

(Jesus taught that every little detail in the Bible is accurate—if God is (present tense) the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, it shows that these three men are still alive in Him even though they have physically died a long time before the time of Jesus. This points to the reality of the resurrection.)

‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet”?’ ⁴⁵If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his son?”

Matthew 22:44-45

(Jesus used a very small detail, “my Lord” to prove that He is God because this verse can only make sense if Jesus is God as referred to by the psalmist as “Lord”; Jesus was not just David’s descendant (his son) but God’s Son.)

Internal consistency

- Written over 1500 years in 3 languages
(Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic)
- By over 30 authors from different backgrounds...
(Prophets, Kings, Farmer (Amos), Fishermen,
Doctor (Luke,)Military commander (Joshua),
Prime Minister (Daniel), Etc.)
- In 2 different continents...

(The Bible is consistent in its theme and the factual information it presents. The internal consistency of the Bible is amazing and different from any other book.)

b. External Evidence

Manuscript Evidence

(The earliest manuscript (copies of the original) of Plato that is available to us is from 1,000 years after he died, of which only about 30-50 original copies exist today. Yet we believe that Plato authored that manuscript—we do not question the accuracy of what we are reading today. Contrast that to the earliest available manuscripts we have of the Bible which have been written as early as 50 years after the original writings after of which we have about 50,000 manuscripts (copies) still existing today. We have so much more accuracy about the integrity and the authenticity of the Bible compared to any other book. Yet the Bible's integrity and accuracy has been attacked by many people.

Muslims do not have any original manuscripts of the Koran so that we cannot check if the Koran's contents today has been changed significantly or corrupted in any way. Yet, Muslims often claim that the Bible has been corrupted through the centuries. But we can confidently say that we have all the evidence to back up our claim that the Bible has remained uncorrupted based on the existing original manuscripts we still have today, while the Koran has no existing manuscript to which it can be checked against for accuracy.)

Archaeology

(One particular area where people have doubted the Bible for many years, is Genesis 13 where the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were mentioned. For many years, there was no evidence from archeology that Sodom and Gomorrah ever existed and so people were saying that the Bible just fabricated these stories in Genesis 13, in fact they claimed that the entire Old Testament was just made up, written by many different people much, much later than the actual events. They also claimed that the Genesis account could not have been written since there was no Semitic language in writing during the time of Abraham (1800 B.C.). But in 1965, there was an archeological discovery of an ancient city—Ebla. It was a very important city and its citizens kept records of tributes given by other cities. They wrote down these records in clay tablets. When the whole city burned down, the library where the clay tablets were kept was also completely destroyed. The clay tablets however hardened in the fire. When the ruins of Ebla were discovered, they found thousands of these preserved clay tablets. The names of Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities in Genesis 13 were

found written down in one of those clay tablets as among those territories who paid tribute to Ebla. They also discovered lexicons or a dictionary translating from the Ebla language to two other Semitic languages!

Archeological discoveries such as the Ebla tablets have proven time and again what the Bible says is true. In fact, archeologists have found the Bible so accurate that they use it to find the things that they have been looking for—it becomes one of the best historical references to be able to find archeological digs.)

Influence

There are many Bible teachings that have been brought into societies that have changed the world.

Discussion 3

How would you answer someone who says, “The Bible is just another book? Why should I believe what it says?”

EXPERIENCE

How should we respond?

1. Knowing that the Bible is reliable, what hinders you from really believing it? What stops you from sharing this to others? Choose at least 3 among the 6 that you would like to highlight in sharing the reliability of the Bible.
 - Fulfilled prophecy
 - Jesus' use of the Bible
 - Internal consistency
 - Manuscript evidence
 - Archaeology
 - Influence

Share these evidences with your Dgroup or someone who is doubting the bible. Make sure to use the explanation in the book. You may add more research you have found.

2. As a result of what I have learned today, before next week I will....

Share with your group your personal application of this session. Pray together that God would allow you to follow through on your commitment.

SESSION 2
GOD'S PERSON
AND NATURE

EXPLORE

GOD IS

Give everyone a blank sheet of paper and pen. Invite the group to draw their own symbol, image or picture to represent their own understanding, belief or unbelief in God. They cannot use words, lettering or numbers. The picture should represent what they think about God. Emphasize that you are not looking for a work of art!

Allow five minutes to complete the picture and ask the group to reveal their picture to the rest of the group in the Express Part Discussion 1 later on. Invite the group to guess what they think each symbol represents about God, after which the 'artist' or the one who draws it can confirm if anyone got it right. Then proceed to answering the discussion questions.

Theological Truth

In the previous session, we saw that God has revealed Himself through His Word. For this reason we can know God, and understand what He is like. However, God did not choose to organize His revelation into a statement of faith, a book of doctrines or an FAQ. So how can we be sure about the nature of God?

(The Bible clearly states that God created the world. What could possibly be biblical is if God created the world in seven literal days. It is definitely in the Bible but is open to interpretation. The creation account when read in the original Hebrew, was written in poetic form. And could be taken literally or not. There are Christians who believe the duration of God creating the world could have been a longer duration of time. What is definitely not biblical is the view that the universe is a product of blind chance with no god involved. This view is clearly not biblical.

There are certain things that Scripture gives us leeway about. But there are things that are to-die for issues.

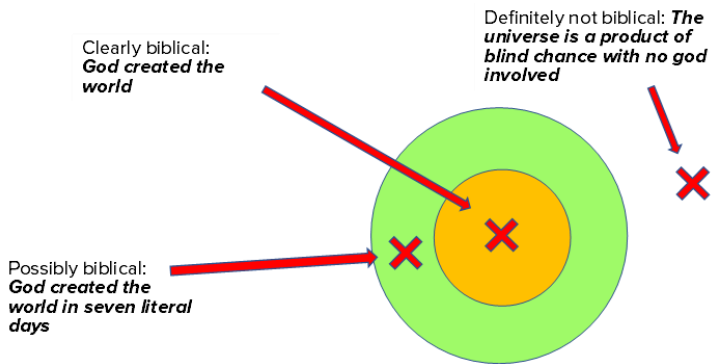
we may not agree on certain issues, but we need to agree on the common core of theology.)

Limits of Theology

The Creation Account

Possible Interpretations:

- Literal - creation in 7 days
- Not literal - creation on a longer duration



Our Response

- Give leeway on certain issues.
- Agree on the common core of theology.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

There are many views about God today:

- Mystical view: We are all god(s) (*New Age*)
- Other religions:
 - There are many gods (*Hinduism has 300 million gods*)
 - There is one God, but Jesus is not God (*Islam, INC, Quiboloy*)
- Atheist view: There is no God

Even among Christians

- (*Prosperity Gospel*) The cosmic genie: God is here to make you happy
- God is distant: God is so busy, He probably doesn't have time for me
- God is angry: He is waiting for me to blow it so He can smack me down

There are times that the way we learned about God also influences how we see and understand God.

Discussion 1

Before you came to Christ, what was your picture of God?

Do any of your wrong ideas about God from before continue to affect you as a believer? How?

(Sometimes our view of God doesn't really correspond with what Scripture teaches. This is why we really need to know who God is. We really need to understand what Scripture says about God.)

What should we know?

Our Statement of Faith about God

We believe that there is only one GOD eternally existent in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

What the Scripture Says About God

God's Person

1. Infinite

God is not subject to any of the limitations of humanity or of creation. He is not limited to our understanding.

(Don't be surprised that you don't fully understand Him, you will need a lifetime to understand Him.)

(Job was a righteous person who Satan asked from God to be tested. Job lost everything, his health, children and possessions and his wife mocked him. At the end of all this, Job does complain to God. Job argued his case that this was unfair and he was a righteous man and that God was in the wrong. God answers him and explained the grandness of His creation.)

¹ Then Job answered the Lord and said,
² "I know that You can do all things,
And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.
³ "Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?"
Therefore I have declared that which I did not
understand,
Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."
⁴ "Hear, now, and I will speak;
I will ask You, and You instruct me."
⁵ "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear;
But now my eye sees You;
⁶ Therefore I retract,
And I repent in dust and ashes."

Job 42:1-6

(Job had a wrong view of God, accusing God of wrongdoing. After God rebukes Job, he now has the right mindset, seeing God as far beyond Job, and Job humbled himself. We must have the same attitude as Job, seeing God as infinite and we are so minuscule. We have to respect Him as God even if we don't understand Him.)

2. Triune

One God in three persons. The triunity in Himself are three persons that have relationships between them.

(Though this concept cannot be fully understood, it is scripturally true, one God in three persons.)

3. Personal

God interacts with us as a person and we can relate to him as persons. He wants to have a relationship with us.

(God created us to have a relationship with us. He is a God of love who wants to have a relationship with us, He is not like the gods other religions.)

*¹⁵ The idols of the nations are but silver and gold,
The work of man's hands.*

*¹⁶ They have mouths, but they do not speak;
They have eyes, but they do not see;*

*¹⁷ They have ears, but they do not hear,
Nor is there any breath at all in their mouths.*

*¹⁸ Those who make them will be like them,
Yes, everyone who trusts in them.*

Psalm 135:15-18

(The irony is people make idols with the creation of man's hands hoping to have a relationship with these idols, but in reality, they have no possibility of having relationships with these man-made gods.)

We can create idols in our own lives but the only one who can truly satisfy is the God who is infinite, triune, and personal.

Discussion 2

What are some ways we might diminish God because of our limited perspective?

What do you wish you understood more about God?

God's Attributes

God's attributes are qualities of God that He has revealed to us so we can know, love and worship Him more.

Incommunicable: things we don't share with God (*These are attributes that we cannot "catch" from God.*)

- **God is Sovereign**

*"Remember the former things long past,
For I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is no one like Me,
¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things which have not been
done,
Saying, 'My purpose will be established,
And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';*

Isaiah 46:9-10

(God is king over everything. He extends rule over the entire universe. We have free will but He still superintends everything to accomplish His will. He is sovereign because He is Lord.)

- **God is Omniscient**

*Great is our Lord and abundant in strength;
His understanding is infinite.*

Psalms 147:5

"God knows instantly and effortlessly all matter and all matters, all mind and every mind, all spirit and all spirits, all being and every being, all creaturehood and all creatures, every plurality and all pluralities, all law and every law, all relations, all causes, all thoughts, all mysteries, all enigmas, all feeling, all desires, every unuttered secret, all thrones and dominions, all personalities, all things visible and invisible in heaven and in earth, motion, space, time, life, death, good, evil, heaven, and hell... Because God knows all things perfectly, He knows no thing better than any other thing, but all thing equally well. He never discovers anything. He is never surprised, never amazed. He never wonders about anything nor (except when drawing men out for their own good) does He seek information or ask questions."

A.W. Tozer¹

"Omniscience means that God knows everything, things actual and possible, effortlessly and equally well."

Charles Ryrie²

"God knows every detail of our lives. There is nothing that escapes His attention. 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered,' Christ said ([Luke 12:7](#))...Perhaps this is the most astounding fact about God's omniscience: He knows every detail about us, yet He still loves us...He knew all about our sins, yet willingly gave His Son to die for us on the cross."

John MacArthur³

¹ As cited in the online article sourced from <https://www.allaboutgod.com/define-omniscient-faq.htm>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

- **God is Omnipresent**

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?⁸ If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there.⁹ If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea,¹⁰ Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me.

Psalm 139:7-10

(God is everywhere, all of the time.)

- **God is Omnipotent**

Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?

Jeremiah 32:27

(There is nothing that He cannot do.)

- **God is Immutable**

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Hebrews 13:8

(God doesn't change. God's essence and character doesn't change. God acts consistently according to His character.)

Discussion 3

Of the incommunicable attributes of God, what is most significant to you? Why?

Communicable: things we do share with God

- **God is eternal**

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Revelation 1:8

(God was before the beginning, even before the Creation, God doesn’t have a beginning and doesn’t have an end. Even at the cross, it is impossible to kill God. The resurrection brought back the eternity of Jesus. He is alive and we will spend eternity with Him.)

- **God is righteous**

*“The Lord is righteous in all His ways
And kind in all His deeds.”*

Psalms 145:17

(Everything God does is right. God doesn’t do anything wrong. The things that are good and kind for all of us.)

- **God is just**

*The Rock! His work is perfect,
For all His ways are just;
A God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous
and upright is He.*

Deuteronomy 32:4

(God doesn’t have favorites. We think of all the difficulties we go through and think that God must not like us very much. If God is a true Father to us, He is going to discipline us. This is because God loves us and want us to flourish.)

- **God is love**

We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

I John 4:16

(God is not just loving but He is Love. By being in constant fellowship with God, we experience true fellowship with Him.)

- **God is truth**

Now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are truth, and You have promised this good thing to Your servant.

II Samuel 7:28

(God can never lie, when He makes a promise, He will fulfill it. You can claim the promises of God in the scriptures. The promise will surely take place.)

Discussion 4

Of the communicable attributes of God, what is most significant to you? Why?

God's Incommunicable Attributes – those we don't share

- God is Sovereign Isaiah 46:9-10
- God is Omniscient Psalm 147:5
- God is Omnipresent Psalm 139:7-10
- God is Omnipotent Jeremiah 32:27
- God is Immutable Hebrews 13:8

God's Communicable Attributes – those we share

- God is eternal Revelation 1:8
- God is righteous Psalm 145:17
- God is just Deuteronomy 32:4
- God is love I John 4:16
- God is truth II Samuel 7:28

Summary

¹ Then Job answered the Lord and said,
² “I know that You can do all things,
And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.
³ ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’
Therefore I have declared that which I did not
understand,
Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.”
⁴ ‘Hear, now, and I will speak;
I will ask You, and You instruct me.’
⁵ “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear;
But now my eye sees You;
⁶ Therefore I retract,
And I repent in dust and ashes.”

Job 42:1-6

(The more we get to know God, the more we see the things we knew of Him before and we need to repent. Sometimes we don't know that God has purposes that we don't know.)

EXPERIENCE

How should we respond?

1. Knowing the attributes of God is a great way of getting to know the Lord. Let's explore ways on how God will help us in our relationships by knowing more of Him.

Give your favorite attributes. Give a verse/story that shows this attribute of God. Explain this in your own words. In what ways will this improve your relationship with your family, Dgroup, and work environment

Attribute of God	Verse/Story Reference	What this means to you (Paraphrase)	How will this affect your relationship with your family?	How will this affect your relationship with your Dgroup?	How will this affect your relationship with your work environment?

2. As a result of what I have learned today, before next week I will....

Share with your group your personal application of this session. Pray together that God would allow you to follow through on your commitment.

SESSION 3

**JESUS: HIS
PERSON AND
WORKS**

EXPLORE

Individually, guess the right answer to the following trivia questions then compare your answers with your group members.

1. You can find the tallest building in the world in which country?
 - a. China
 - b. Dubai
 - c. Germany
2. In which place will you find the smallest dog in the world (as of February 2013)?
 - a. Kentucky, USA
 - b. Hokkaido, Japan
 - c. Dorado, Puerto Rico
3. Which is the most-populated city in the world?
 - a. Tokyo, Japan
 - b. Mumbai, India
 - c. Shanghai, China

LEARNING NUGGET

It's quite interesting to find out about the most unique characteristics of people, things and places in our world. To be unique is to be one-of-a kind; to stand out or to surpass others in the same category in quality or quantity. In our lesson today, we will learn about the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. Truly, He is one-of-a-kind in His person and in His work — eternally unsurpassed by anyone or anything in heaven, earth or anywhere else in all creation.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

(After Jesus resurrected, people made up myths on what had truly happened to Him. There are many beliefs on who Jesus really is, so we need to know the truth about Him.)

- In many circles, belief in God is OK, just don't talk about Jesus!

(If Jesus is exclusive then that means every other religion is wrong. This is offensive to many, but Jesus is truly the only way to God.)

- Some doubt His historical existence
(There are those who say that when looking at the "historical Jesus", what the Bible tells about Him isn't true. They claim that Jesus was an ordinary man that later on people decided to make into a god. They claim that Jesus never made a declaration on whether He was truly God.)
- Others claim He was human but not God
(There is the belief that Jesus is the Son of God but not God Himself. Adherents to this belief accepts that Jesus is a very important figure in religion but denies that He is God.)
- Still others doubt His supernatural works
(Others say that when Jesus was on earth, people were very naive during that time, and people believed in mythology. Miracles were not real, just made up by His followers to build up new religion.)

Even among Christians

- Misunderstanding about being God and man

(Many people still have misconceptions about this. It is not easy to understand how Jesus can be both God and man. But the Bible declares that this is the truth.)

- Misunderstanding about what was accomplished on the cross.

(The Muslim religion does not believe that Jesus died on the cross, they say He just fainted. They said that people thought that He had died and placed Him in the tomb that is why He was able to “strengthen” Himself after a couple of days and pushed the stone and escaped from the Roman guard. Other people ask the question, “Why did Jesus have to die?”, and the answer is, “He died to take away my sins”. But people do not understand the connection of Jesus dying on the cross and their sins being forgiven.)

Discussion 1

Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?”
How would you answer that question today?

Before you came to Christ, what was your understanding of Jesus?

What should we know?

CCF Statement of Faith about Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ in the flesh was both God and Man, that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life. He was crucified and He died to pay the penalty of death for our sins.

By His shed blood, the Lord Jesus Christ made a perfect sacrifice for sin once and for all time and was raised from the dead on the third day.

Later He ascended to the Father's right hand where He is the Head of the Church and intercedes for believers. We believe He is coming again to the Earth bodily and visibly to set up His Kingdom.

The Person Jesus: His Humanity

- **Born of a virgin**

*“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, **a virgin** will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.”*

Isaiah 7:14

(This prophesy was given at a time it was partially fulfilled through a different person. The word “virgin” can mean a single person and not just someone who has not had sexual relations with a man. Isaiah gave this prophesy to a king but the real fulfillment of this prophesy came 600 years later in the life of Jesus.)

This is the fulfillment of the prophesy of Isaiah:

*“Behold, **the virgin** shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.”*

Matthew 1:23

This means that God is coming to man, He is going to be living among us.

...when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.

Matthew 1:18-19

(Many people today will deny that Jesus was really born of a virgin. They would probably say that Mary was messing around then got pregnant, that's why Jesus was born. Or that people then just didn't understand the dynamics of how babies were made, they thought she was a virgin but clearly she wasn't. This was obviously not true because when Joseph found out she was pregnant he wanted to send her to a secret place so people wouldn't gossip about her. Because everyone knew that if she was pregnant and she was supposed to be betrothed, people would think that Joseph must have slipped up and some happened, that's why she got pregnant. And during that time, that was definitely the end of the relationship. But why did they not split up? Because they angel came and explained Mary's situation.)

- **He was human with intellect, will, emotions**

Jesus had emotion, intellect, and was just like any other human being.

“And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

Luke 2:52

(Jesus grew. Imagine a baby that was already God and as soon as He was born knew everything and could talk. The baby developed into a child which developed into an adolescent who developed into Jesus the adult. Jesus grew in stature, meaning He got taller.

He grew in intellect and wisdom. We remember a time when His parents went to a festival in Jerusalem and as they left with a big group of people, they didn't realize that Jesus wasn't there and so they had to go back to Jerusalem where they found him at the temple, talking with all of the scribes and the Bible scholars, debating and interacting with them about prophecy and about things in the Bible. At 12 years old He was already growing in the knowledge of the Word of God and becoming more the leader God wanted Him to be.)

- **Normal physical limitations**

He became **hungry**.

And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.

Matthew 4:2

(This means, Jesus was human, just like us. This is medically correct as Jesus began to feel hunger again after his extended period of fasting.)

He became **thirsty**.

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, "I am thirsty..."

John 19:28

Jesus had **physical needs** just like all of us.

Jesus also **had limitations**

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone."

Matthew 24:36

(Jesus was not omniscient when He was in His human form. In terms of His knowledge, He had limitations. Your brain has a finite capacity for information. You can't know everything. When Jesus chose to become human, accepted the limitations that He had as a human being that He wouldn't know everything. Clearly there were certain things He could be prophetic about, but there were many other things that He didn't know.)

The Life of Christ

- Sinless (*although He faced temptation, He didn't sin.*)

*“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet **without sin.**”*

Hebrews 4:15

(Temptation by itself is not sin, sin is when you give into the temptation. Jesus faced all of the same temptations that we do, yet He did not give in to temptation, He remained faithful to obey the will of God.)

- His mission: to seek and save the lost

(In His earthly life He pursued this calling. For three years He was very active in accomplishing the mission the Father gave Him.)

For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Luke 19:10

(Jesus did this when He died on the cross. In His earthly ministry, what He did on a day-to-day basis was to save people as he preached the good news of the kingdom to those that did not know about Him.

If we are supposed to be Christlike, then our mission should be the same. If Jesus' mission is to seek and save the lost, that should also be our mission.)

Jesus had a very clear mission, He knew what God called Him to do.

-
- His method: making disciples

(If you wanted to reach all of the lost people what should you do? You should go out and preach the gospel and do evangelistic campaigns and there were times that Jesus did this. But most of His time in ministry was not doing this, most of His time in ministry was spent in making disciples.)

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20

(Jesus commanded them to disciple. What did Jesus teach His disciples to do? To make disciples. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, and you want to obey Him, then what do you need to do? Make disciples. What do you need to teach your disciples? To make disciples. This is Jesus’ method, and He staked His entire ministry on this method. Jesus didn’t have a plan B.)

Jesus had a clear mission and a clear methodology and if we want to be like Him, we need to follow what He did.

Discussion 2

What is most significant to you about the fact that Jesus lived as a human on earth? Why is that important to you?

Jesus only ministered for three years, but the impact changed the world. Why was discipleship His method to fulfill His mission?

(How do we know that Jesus is truly God? There is clear teaching from the Bible that He is God.)

Jesus: His Deity

- Direct and indirect claims
- Received worship
- Did things only God can do
- Rose from the dead

Direct and Indirect Claims

*“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸and I **give eternal life** to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of **My hand**. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the **Father’s hand**. ³⁰**I and the Father are one.**”*

John 10:27-30

-
- *(Whose hand are we in? Is it Jesus' or God the Father's? We are in both. Both of them won't let us go. People say that Jesus never claimed to be God, but...)* Jesus claims that He and the Father are one. In claiming this, He states that He and the Father are of the same essence.

*“Jesus answered them, “I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?”³³The Jews answered Him, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, **make Yourself out to be God.**”*

John 10:32-33

- The audience wanted to stone Jesus for blasphemy because they saw Jesus as a man who was claiming to be God.

*“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, **I am.**’⁵⁹Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.”*

John 8:58-59

*(Why were the Jews so upset and wanting to stone Jesus? Abraham is dead, he lived hundreds of years before Jesus, and **Jesus is claiming, “before Abraham was, I am”** and not “I was”. What is the word, “I am”? When God was talking to Moses (in the burning bush) and Moses asked God “what will I say when they ask, ‘Who sent me? What will I say your name is?’; God instructed Moses to introduce Him as, “**I am who I am.**” “**YHWH**” translated into Greek is “**ego eimi**”, this is exactly what Jesus said. In the*

*Septuagint, in Exodus 3, God is using the same word, “ego eimi” as Jesus uses here. **The Jews knew exactly what Jesus was talking about. That’s why they wanted to kill Him. They clearly understood that He was claiming to be God because He pre-existed Abraham and used the very name of God to identify who He was.***

*“In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was **with God**, and the **Word was God.**”*

John 1:1

- Rule in the Greek language - “the” or “a”

(There is a rule in the Greek language that identifies whether it is a specific or a general, “the” or “a”. In the construction of this sentence, it is only acceptable to use, “the”. It is not “a” god, but “the” God. You cannot make it into “a” god. The Greek language is very clear. It does not translate directly into English or Tagalog but if you read this in Greek, there is no other option. It is not talking about “a” god, but God.)

*“And the **Word** became **flesh**, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

John 1:14

- He is God in the flesh, He is Jesus.

Jesus Received Worship

*“And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples. ⁹And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and **worshiped Him.**”*

Matthew 28:8-9

- The only person that would be worshipped in the Jewish religion is God.

(If you take hold of somebody’s feet, what is the position of your body? You have to be faced on the ground on a prostrated position as if worshipping. So when they worshipped Him, they were on their faces before Him, touching His feet. They were saying “You are God”, because the only person that would be worshipped in the Jewish religion is God.)

*“For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of **Jesus every knee will bow**, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

Philippians 2:9-11

- We are all going to worship Jesus.

(We are sure that this will happen and is something we look forward to. We are all going to worship Jesus. When you go to heaven, who are you going to see? You are going to see Jesus. But where is God the Father? He is also there, but who will you bow before? Jesus.)

“I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another...”

Isaiah 42:8

- Only the Lord is supposed to get the glory. Only the Lord is supposed to be worshipped. He will not share His glory with anyone else.

- Philippians 2:10-11

If Jesus isn't God, there isn't any way that God will allow people to worship Him in heaven because only God deserves worship.

Jesus Did Works Only God Can Do

Forgive Sins

“And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’”

Mark 2:5

- Only God can forgive sins because only God is sinned against.

(Instead of just saying, “I heal you”, Jesus says, “your sins are forgiven.” How can Jesus say to them that their sins are forgiven? The only person that can forgive somebody's sin is the person that was sinned against. How can Jesus forgive them unless He is God since only God can forgive sins because only God is sinned against. Jesus is claiming to be God when He declares forgiveness of one's sin.)

Create

“For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Colossians 1:16

- Genesis 1 and Colossians 1

(In Genesis chapter 1, who created the heavens and the earth? God. Now what about Colossians, who created the Heavens and the earth? Jesus. Did God create the heavens and the earth or did Jesus? Both. This is an Indirect but persuasive claim, showing that there is no difference between the two when it comes to creation.)

- Jesus was as instrumental to Creation as God the Father.

Grant eternal life

*“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸and I **give eternal life** to them, and they will never perish;”*

John 10:27-28a

(Jesus says that He has the authority to give people eternal life. Who can do that?)

- Only God has authority to give people eternal life.

Judge all the nations

*“But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then **He will sit on His glorious throne.** ³²All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats...”*

Matthew 25:31-32

- Who is going to be judging the nations at the final judgement? (*Jesus. But who is the judge? It is God, because Jesus is God. If you do the works of God then you are God.*)
- Only God can judge--that is His job. This is not delegated to someone else.

Predicted His own death and resurrection

“Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’”

John 2:19

- Jesus not only knew that He was going to die and rise again, but He predicted how it was going to happen.

(In the Passion as the Jews were accusing Jesus of blasphemy which lead to His trial, two witness came forward)

...and said, “This man stated, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.’”

Matthew 26:61

-
- Not the physical temple
 - The Jews knew that Jesus was claiming that He will rise from the dead. That was why when Jesus died and was buried, they asked a Roman guard to be put in front of the tomb of Jesus.

(This is to stop the disciples from stealing the body and claiming that Jesus has resurrected since the body is no longer in the tomb. They wanted to stop these rumors from spreading. The Jews knew Jesus' claim of resurrection and that He was not pertaining to the physical temple.)

*"He is not here, for **He has risen, just as He said**. Come, see the place where He was lying. ⁷Go quickly and tell His disciples that **He has risen from the dead**; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you."*

Matthew 28:6-7

- We know that Jesus is who He claims to be because He made the claims and predictions early on in His ministry.
(There is so much historical evidence that this is a reality. It can be proven in many ways.)

- What happened at Pentecost?

(The disciples were in an upper room, hiding because they were afraid that they too will be killed. These are not the world-changing leaders that appear 50 days later. When the Holy Spirit came upon them, they became emboldened and started preaching the gospel. This is the message Peter preached.)

“...this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. ²⁴But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.”

Acts 2:23-24

- The greatest proof of the deity of Jesus is His resurrection.

(It is the lives of the people that followed Him and were suddenly willing to give their lives for this reality that Jesus was still alive. If you were one of the apostles, would you die for a lie? All of the apostles except for John, died a martyr's death unwilling to give up that strong conviction that Jesus was alive. This is the truth, Jesus is still alive.

Discussion 3

Imagine that you are having lunch with group of officemates who hear that you are a Christian. They challenge you to explain why you believe Jesus is God. How would you answer them?

The Work of Christ: Atonement

The most important thing that Jesus did was the work on the cross that made reconciliation with us possible. This is what theologians refer to when they talk about the “finished work of Christ” on the cross.

*“Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹namely, that God was in Christ **reconciling the world to Himself**, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”*

II Corinthians 5:18-19

- Jesus came to reconcile us with God, this is the primary reason that He came to earth.

(Jesus’ mission was to seek and save the lost. The only way to accomplish this was to die to make it possible for us to be reconciled back to God. If Jesus did not do this, we would still be lost. Even if He came to preach, nothing would have changed because the basic problem, the root issue of our separation from God had not been dealt with.)

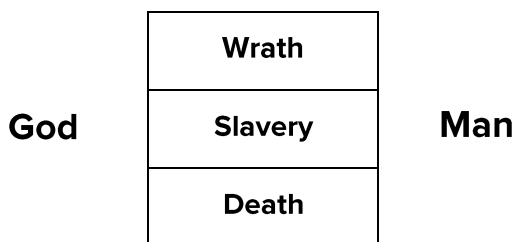
“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ²and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.”

I John 2:1-2

- Jesus is the propitiation which means He is the complete satisfaction of what is required for us to be forgiven.
(Jesus completely satisfied the requirements of God for atonement.)
- The Old Testament atonement was just a picture of the perfect, final, solution, that Jesus did on the cross many years later.

(Atonement happened when the priests would sacrifice once a year an unblemished lamb and would sprinkle to blood on the holy place. In this atonement, the sins of the nation of Israel are just covered for that year. The priests had to do this every year or else there would be no atonement of sins. This was just a picture of the perfect, final, solution, that Jesus did on the cross many years later.)

Three-fold Barrier Between God and Man



Christ's Death Overcame All!

- **Wrath: Propitiation**

- The abiding anger of God against sin

(An eternal hatred of sin. When He sees us apart from Christ, we being sinful are the recipients of His wrath. Because we are sinful His anger is against us. This anger keeps us from experiencing reconciliation from God.)

- Wrath satisfied by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus

- **Slavery: Redemption**

- We are slaves of sin and Satan.

(As much as we would like to be released, we cannot. This separates us from God.)

- The solution to slavery is redemption.

(Somebody pays the penalty to free you from being a slave, then you become free. Jesus paid the price to free us from slavery to sin and Satan.)

- **Spiritual Death: Substitution**

- Before we come to Christ we are spiritually dead.

(We cannot seek after God on our own, because we are spiritually dead. God has to initiate with us because we can't initiate with Him. If you are dead, you can't do anything to save yourselves.)

- Jesus died as a substitute (Romans 5:8)

(God's anger against sin was completely satisfied when Jesus died on the cross, where the entire wrath of God rested on Jesus. When Jesus said, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?", this was the moment where He experienced the intense wrath of God against sin that came upon Him rather than on us. We were deserving of that wrath but Jesus took it all on Himself.

We would have to die for our own sins (spiritual death), had Jesus not died for us. He died as a substitute. We read this in Romans 5:8, "That while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.")

Through His atoning sacrifice, He deals with the wrath of God, our slavery to sin, and spiritual death. This barrier is no longer in the way, what is left is for us to be reconciled with God.

Perfect Atonement

(Jesus died exactly at the time that the high priest was supposed to offer the atoning sacrifice)

- Jesus took the place of the lamb that was supposed to be slaughtered for the sins of Israel.
- It was prophesied that all the sacrificial system would be eliminated after the Messiah would come.

(The Israelites were looking for a political Messiah, one who would free them from the Romans, but what they got is a spiritual Messiah. One that satisfied the just demands to bring reconciliation.)

- This whole system of animal sacrifice is no longer used, because it is no longer needed.

(When Jesus died, within a generation, God allowed the temple to be destroyed. And from that time on from 70 AD until today, there have no longer been any animal sacrifices in Israel.)

- Jesus was the one that paid the sacrifice that eliminated the need for the sacrificial system in the temple.

“Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹²but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. ¹⁴For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.”

Hebrews 10:11-14

We do not need to sacrifice for our sins anymore because there is one sacrifice that has paid the penalty for everything wrong that we have ever done—past, present and future. Jesus has provided the perfect atonement for our sins.

How should we respond?

1. To understand Jesus is to know Him more and to further see His attributes. We need to clarify unbiblical thoughts about Him. What are the things you hear that are biblically not true of Jesus? Find verse references answering these concerns. Who will you share this new found information to?

Unbiblical Thoughts	Verse Clarification	New Meaning	Person You Will Share this to

2. As a result of what I have learned today, before next week I will....

Share with your group your personal application of this session. Pray together that God would allow you to follow through on your commitment.

SESSION 4

SALVATION

Which item would you most likely line up for if it were given away for free?

1. Gift certificate for two in a Michelin Star restaurant that serves your favorite dishes.
2. Family vacation in one of the top tourist attractions in the world.
3. Air fare to a travel destination of your choice.
4. Latest mobile phone or tablet.
5. Voucher for an Eat-All-You-Can buffet.
6. Spa and beauty treatment at a well-known salon in the city.
7. Grocery items in time for Noche Buena (Christmas Eve dinner), New Year's Eve, or other special celebration.
8. Latest book from your favorite Christian author.
9. Movie passes for two for the premier showing of the latest offering of your favorite action/adventure trilogy.
10. Weekend stay at one of the highly-recognized hotels in the city.

LEARNING NUGGET

Most people will line up quickly ahead of the others for something that is given away for free. But have you ever wondered why most people will not line up for the gift of salvation that God offers to all of us for free? What is it about the nature of salvation that we need to share so that people will highly desire it? Today we will study CCF's Statement of Faith on the nature of salvation.

Why is this important?

- Today people are not even sure they have a problem

(Many people today do not think of themselves as being lost. They think, “Why do we need to be saved when life is going pretty well?” One can share the gospel to them and they will insist that, “I am okay”.)

- Not only do they reject God, but they see no need for salvation

(People will insist that they are good enough for God or they are religious people already)

- What is important is their own happiness today

(God isn’t really part of the picture. If you think about what’s really important in their lives it is their happiness, career, family, material things, excitement, God is on that list but at the bottom.)

Even among Christians

- Still much misunderstanding about how people are saved

(Christians think that they understand salvation but there are still misconceptions)

- Are they saved forever?

(Christians wonder if salvation is a permanent state, or can you lose your salvation?)

- Can you know for sure that you are saved?
- What is the basis for our salvation?

(Christians wonder if salvation is based on something that you do, or something God has done.)

Discussion 1

What did you understand about salvation when you were younger? Was it biblical? Why or why not?

What changes do you see in people's attitudes to salvation today?

What should we know?

CCF Statement of Faith about Salvation

We believe that Salvation, with its forgiveness of sins, impartation of a new nature, and eternal life, is a free gift from God received when a person trusts in Jesus Christ to be their only Savior and Lord. Salvation is given by God's grace and cannot be earned by man through good works, baptism, church membership or any other means. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

We believe that good works are not the means of salvation but are the expected product in the life of a true believer in Christ. It is every believer's responsibility to pursue a life of good works through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

(Good works are done not for us to be saved but as an expression of our thanksgiving for being saved.)

Salvation

Our Condition

At the Fall:

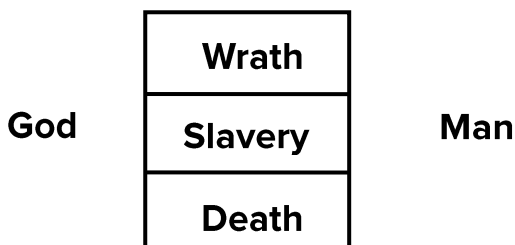
- We experienced spiritual death (Romans 5:12)
- We became slaves of sin and Satan (John 8:34; Rom. 6:6)
- We became objects of God's abiding wrath (John 3:36)

(These barriers cause Man to not have a relationship with God. There is nothing we can do to change our situation. The barrier is an impermeable barrier. No matter how many good works you do, you are still spiritually dead.)

- *You can't please God on your own.*
- *You are still a slave to sin and to Satan.*
- *You are still under God's wrath even if you try to be good.*
- *One sin is sufficient for God's wrath to abide on you.*

This barrier is not something we can overcome. Even through many good works, this barrier makes it impossible any man to be acceptable to God.)

Three-fold Barrier Between God and Man



And you were **dead in your trespasses and sins**, ²in which you formerly walked **according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air**, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath**, even as the rest.

Ephesians 2:1-3

(In this one passage you see spiritual death, the wrath of God, and slavery to sin and Satan. This is a biblical concept that keeps us away from God. But what did Christ do in order to overcome this barrier?)

Christ's Death Overcame All

- Wrath: Propitiation
- Slavery: Redemption
- Spiritual Death: Substitution

Wrath: Propitiation

- *Thumos* – burst of anger

(What happens when you get mad at somebody when you are stuck in traffic, or at your kids because they didn't do what you told them to do, or at your spouse, or you stub your toe? Something happened, and you react. This is never used about God. He just doesn't lose patience or get angry because we did something dumb)

- *Orge* – abiding state of enmity

(Anger against us, wrath against the sin in us, we cannot separate ourselves from this sin, the wrath of God is on us because we are sinful.)

- *Thumos* is never used of God

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ²and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

I John 2:1-2

Propitiation: Satisfaction, Covering

- Mercy Seat
(The Ark of the Covenant of the Israelites in the Old Testament had the mercy seat that was on top of the golden box that had Aaron's reed and the Ten Commandment tablets that were precious to the

Israelites, and the Ark was placed inside the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle, and later, the temple. Once, every year the priest would come with his sacrifice at the Passover and sprinkle blood over the mercy seat which was on top of the box. Inside the box is the scroll of the law.

Think about the symbolism. We are condemned under the law. The law tells us that we are sinful. But the mercy seat was where the priest would sprinkle the blood and the blood would cover the box.)

It is the mercy of God that allows the wrath of God to be satisfied.

(We know that sacrifice didn't work as a permanent solution for the forgiveness of sins, because every year it would have to be done again. It is in Hebrews that says that Jesus offered once and for all, His sacrifice of blood does not need to be repeated)

- Jesus has made the perfect sacrifice. This is the propitiation, the satisfaction of God's just demands for sin to be paid for.

(In 70 AD, the Jews stopped offering sacrifice. The Jews had been offering sacrifices for hundreds of years, but when (in 70 AD) the temple was destroyed, the Israelites just gave up on these sacrifices. In God's perfect time, the temple sacrifices was no longer needed.)

-
- Satisfaction also means covering. God sees us clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

(He doesn't see us as a person deserving of wrath, He sees the covering of the blood of Jesus which makes us acceptable to Him and no longer the object of His wrath.)

You forgave the iniquity of your people; you covered all their sin. ³You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger.

Psalm 85:2-3

(The idea of the turning away of God's wrath on us because our sins have been forgiven and covered, was already pictured in the Old Testament. There are so much in the Old Testament that gives a picture of what Jesus was going to do in the future. The whole picture of the mercy seat is a picture of Christ satisfying the wrath of God through the shedding of His blood.)

Slavery: Redemption

(A slave is freed when somebody buys him and sets him free. During the time of Jesus, more than half of the population of the Roman empire were slaves. They understood this concept really well. The people then knew someone who was a slave, or they owned a slave, or they might even have been a slave. So slavery was a very understandable concept to them. How does someone get bought out of slavery?)

Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. ³⁵The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. ³⁶So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

John 8:34-36

Who can redeem?

- Someone free – not another slave

(The story of Ruth uses the same terms of a kinsman redeemer, and has Boaz redeeming her.)

- A kinsman (Galatians. 4:4-5)

(It was very important that the redeemer had to be a kinsman. It couldn't be somebody that didn't come from the same family.

Who is the only kinsman that can redeem us? One that has not sinned, is not in slavery himself and only Jesus has done this. But he has to be a human being, someone like us. This is why Jesus had to come to earth, because He needed to be a kinsman in order to make a sacrifice.)

- Someone willing to redeem (John 10:18)
- Someone able to redeem

(Jesus is the only one who fits the qualifications to be our Redeemer.)

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Galatians 4:4-5

For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. ¹⁸No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.

John 10:17-18

*No man can by any means redeem his brother
Or give to God a ransom for him—
⁸For the redemption of his soul is costly,
And he should cease trying forever—
⁹That he should live on eternally,
That he should not undergo decay.*

Psalms 49:7-9

(Nobody can pay for our sins except for Jesus. If we try to pay for our own sins it is as if we are buying our way back to God. An example is when upon sinning, one gives more tithes. If you are already a Christian, a child of God, then you are already forgiven, you do not need to give more tithes. It is not pleasing to God to think that you can buy out God. Jesus is the only one who can pay the penalty to redeem us out of slavery to sin and to Satan.)

Discussion 2

What is most meaningful to you about these two aspects of salvation? Why?

We can be tempted to think, this person isn't that bad, their life is OK (maybe even better than mine). How does knowing the truth about salvation change our perspective?

Spiritual Death

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned...

Romans 5:12

(Before trusting in Christ as our Savior, we were all dead, separated from God. Jesus died in our place for the penalty of our sins. We should have been the ones to die because we deserved death but Jesus died instead of us. The replacement makes us possible to be saved.)

When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, ¹⁴having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Colossians 2:13-14

(In New Testament times, if you were arrested, you would have a chalk board outside of your cell. The chalk board would signify how many years you need to serve for your crime. It would also indicate if you had the death penalty. This verse talks about this “certificate of debt” was canceled out. It’s as if God took an eraser to the chalk board and erased it as if you have not done any sin. It’s a picture of how you have this certificate that is a witness against you, you deserve to die, and Jesus comes along and says, “I have paid the penalty for all your sins, it is gone.”)

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

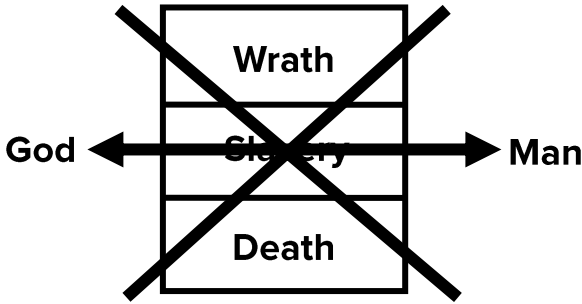
For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23

(We all know that we have all sinned and fallen short of God, this is stated in Romans 6:23.)

- How many of us have sinned?
- What do we deserve because of our sin?

(All of us have sinned. We all deserve death. How many people will die for another person? How many people will die for somebody that deserves death and has actually hated you and been your enemy? That’s what we have been to Jesus; yet He chose to die in our place. If He didn’t die, none of us could have a relationship with Christ, none of us could be reconciled to God, because we should have died for our own sin.)



(Now the three-fold barrier between God and Man is are gone. Jesus has appeased the wrath of God through propitiation, has redeemed us so we are no longer slaves, and He has taken away death because He has died in our place.)

All of the barriers have been taken away but we are still separated from God. We still need to be reconciled to God.
(We need to experience this reconciliation.)

*Now all these things are from God, who **reconciled us to Himself through Christ** and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,¹⁹namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the **world to Himself**, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us **the word of reconciliation**.*

II Corinthians 5:18-19

(God has taken away all of the barriers that keep us from being reconciled to Himself. And yet, if we don't experience that reconciliation then it is all for nothing. How does that reconciliation exactly happen?)

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, **be reconciled to God.**

II Corinthians 5:20

(One can have a right relationship with God; all you have to do is turn to Him. The enmity between God and man is that God is facing man, but man is facing the other way. We need to be reconciled, we need to turn back to God. That is what repentance is, turning 180° away from the direction you are going and turning back to God. This is when you will be saved.)

Who is saved?

Those who are **predestined?**

Those who **choose?**

(Are people elected to salvation? Or do they have free will?)

The Biblical answer: **Yes!**

- The Bible says both of these are true.
- Scripture teaches both sides.
- Both have biblical support.

(Our problem is that we are finite beings. It is hard to reconcile whether we are elect because God chooses us or if we are saved because we choose Him. Scripture teaches both sides. The two basic schools of thought are Calvinist/Reformed Theology and Armenianism, with regard to election and free will. Each side selects certain verses and put it in a system and ignore other verses that don't agree with their stand.

CCF is neither Calvinist nor Armenian. CCF is biblical, taking the Bible as it is. Both sides are true, but how this works together will be hard to understand.

Both have biblical support.)

Elect: Key passages

*When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and **as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.***

Acts 13:48

(Only the people who were appointed, believed. The rest didn't. They were elect, they were appointed.)

*...who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to **His own purpose and grace** which was granted us in Christ Jesus **from all eternity,***

II Timothy 1:9

(From eternity past, God already knew who He was going to call to become saved, it is His election.)

What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! ¹⁵For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” ¹⁶So then **it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.**

Romans 9:14-16

(This is talking about Israel, but it has application for us, the church. God is responsible for choosing and not man.)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as **He chose us** in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵He **predestined us to adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ to Himself, **according to the kind intention of His will...**

Ephesians 1:3-5

(Who is making the choice? God. He elects us, before the foundation of the world. Before we have made any decision, He has already selected us.)

Choose: Key passages

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; ¹⁵so that **whoever believes** will in Him have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes** in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3:14-16

(Would God say “whoever” if it was only offered to the elect?)

If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, **choose for yourselves today** whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Joshua 24:15

(Who makes the decision? Joshua is making the decision for himself if he will serve the Lord, and is making that challenge to all of Israel.)

Joshua said to the people, 'You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen for yourselves the Lord, to serve Him.' And they said, 'We are witnesses.'

Joshua 24:22

(Israel chose the Lord.)

...that **if you confess** with your mouth Jesus as Lord, **and believe** in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, **you will be saved**; ¹⁰for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. ¹¹For the Scripture says, '**Whoever believes** in Him will not be disappointed.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for **all who call on Him**; ¹³for '**Whoever will call** on the name of the Lord **will be saved**.'

Romans 10:9-13

(It is our choice, if we call in the name of the Lord, we will be saved.)

This is a tension

- Not every tension in Scripture is resolved.
- Humanly we cannot conceive of how God's sovereignty and man's will can function together.

(It is difficult to understand how God chooses to do both. God can sovereignly ordain election from the foundation of the world and who is going to be saved. At the same time God offers salvation and people can make a choice to decide whether to be saved. This is the stand of the Bible.)

- The solution is not to explain away the tension.
(The solution is to try to live with the tension.)

A way forward?

*To those...who are **chosen²according to the foreknowledge of God the Father**, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.*

1 Peter 1:1-2

(God considers what He knows of the future. God knows us from our eternity past, what our predisposition is going to be, are we likely to be responsive to the Gospel? Based on His foreknowledge of us, we can say that He chooses us from eternity past yet at the same time, He gives us a choice. If you take into consideration His foreknowledge, it is possible that His election and our free will can work together. These two are biblical concepts, that must go together.)

Discussion 3

How does this discussion affect your understanding of the issue of predestination and free will?

What are we called to do as ambassadors for Christ? How are you doing that?

The result of salvation

- We **are** saved – salvation, free from the penalty of sin

(once you make this decision and Christ is in your life and you have been forgiven, you are saved. Once you are saved, nothing can snatch you from the Father's hand. Nothing can take you from the love of God.)

Praying the prayer of acceptance does not automatically make one saved. This is something between the person and God. It could be that they are truly sincerely put their faith in Jesus. What is the result of turning to faith in Jesus? Life transformation. A person who has come to faith in Jesus will not stay the same.

However, one is not saved by one's works. One is saved by faith alone. If there is no corroborating evidence, there is no indication that there's been any change in their life, there might not be any assurance of salvation. If somebody prays the prayer of acceptance, it is not automatic that they are saved. If you are sincere in trusting Christ, then you will indeed go to heaven.)

-
- We **are being** saved – sanctification, becoming free from the experience of sin

(One is continually growing and becoming more and more like Christ. Sanctification is part of salvation. These two cannot be separated. This is part of what it means to be saved.)

- We **will be** saved – glorification, eternally free from the presence of sin

(One will be given a glorified body, will be in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, for eternity.

Salvation comes in three parts. (1) We are being saved from our sins, no longer under the penalty of death, no longer being slaves to sin, no longer being under the wrath of God. But it doesn't stop here. (2) There is a continuing process of being sanctified to the image of Christ. (3) Which ultimately leads to the point when we pass from this earth, we will be glorified with Jesus in heaven for eternity, we will be completely separated from sin.)

(If this is all true, then what should we do?)

Our ministry

*Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹namely, that God was in **Christ reconciling the world to Himself**, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

2 Corinthians 5:18-19

(What is our job? We need to urge people to be reconciled to God. People you know may who do not know Christ are dying, even if they don't know it themselves. They might not have any knowledge that they are separated from God.)

Many people that are not Christians think that life is okay, they don't know that they are dying without God. We Christians know this and so we must tell people that they need to be reconciled to God. Even if these people don't think they need to be.

Don't believe the lie of Satan that your friends are just okay without Christ. This is not true. Your friends are dead in their sin, they are destined for an eternity apart from Christ. God has given us the job as ambassadors for Him to urge people to reconcile with God. Are you up for the job?)

EXPERIENCE

How should we respond?

1. Salvation can be best explained by sharing the Gospel. Practice how you share the gospel and the points that you give in sharing. Identify the points and explain the background on the point. Review how you share the gospel. Should you tweak your process? Identify the improvements.

Points in Sharing the Gospel	Doctrinal explanation (Where is doctrine/bible do we find this?)	Evaluation of your own sharing	How you will improve
Man has a sin problem			
God has a solution - Jesus died for our sins			
Jesus is the perfect sacrifice			
What our response should be			
What is the result of our faith			

-
2. As a result of what I have learned today, before next week I will....

Share with your group your personal application of this session. Pray together that God would allow you to follow through on your commitment.

SESSION 5

THE TRINITY

True or False. Indicate whether the statements about the Godhead (Trinity) is true or false. Put T if it is true or F if it is false at the end of every statement.

1. Jesus Christ is God.
2. The Trinity means that there are three (3) Persons in one God, all of these Persons having equal rank and are of the same nature.
3. The Holy Spirit is a Divine Force.
4. Jesus Christ is half-God and half-man.
5. The Trinity means that there is only one God who exists in three (3) forms: as Father, who became the Son when He became man, and who became the Holy Spirit after the resurrection.
6. The Holy Spirit is God, equal with the Father and the Son.
7. Jesus Christ was just a man, a created being who was sinless.
8. The Trinity means that there are three (3) Gods of equal rank and of the same nature.
9. The Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ in spirit form.
10. Jesus Christ is God who became man and ceased to be God.
11. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but lesser in rank than the Father.

EXAMINE & EXPRESS

Why is this important?

- Different groups have different teachings about the nature of the Trinity.
- Christian cults like INC, Jehovah's Witnesses, United Pentecostals, and Mormons oppose Scriptural teaching. *(They don't agree with the Trinity)*
- Islam teaches that Christians believe in a Trinity of God the Father, Jesus and Mary.

Even among Christians

(The Trinity is something we need to know more in detail because people will have questions. The topic is so broad, it is easy to make a mistake.)

- The Trinity is a difficult thing to explain.
- The more detailed we become in our explanation, often the more problems we encounter.
- The complexity of the Trinity lends itself to misunderstanding.

Discussion 1

Assign two people in your group to engage in a discussion. The first is a Christian. The second is not a Christian. The non-Christian should challenge the Christian's belief in the Trinity. The Christian should defend their belief in the Trinity. Other group members should make observations about the interaction. What did you learn?

What should we know?

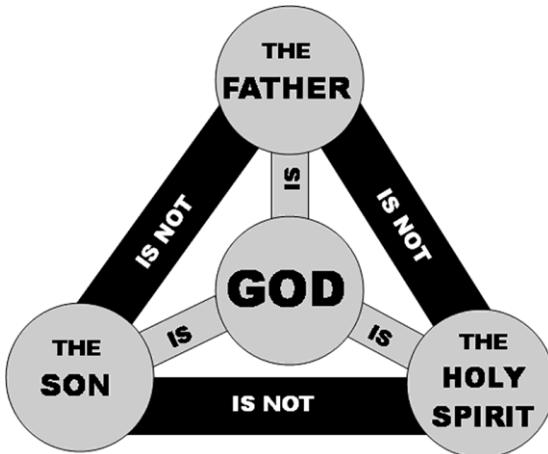
We believe that there is only one GOD eternally existent in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We believe that Jesus Christ in the flesh was both God and Man

We believe that the Holy Spirit is God and possesses all the Divine attributes.

(The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, they are all equal but they are all different people and not the same one person. Is this hard to understand? Yes, this is something that is hard to understand for most Christians. This is beyond us. Do not feel bad if you feel you have failed in understanding the Trinity.)

Right View of the Trinity



(We usually associate God the Father with the highest being. God and God the Father makes sense to us. The Son is also included in the Trinity. Jesus claimed that He was God. Scripture discusses this in detail. Jesus is God, but not the Father, they are different. When Jesus was walking on earth would pray to who? God the Father. Jesus communicates with the Father. Which one of the is God? Both of them. There is a communication within the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is also God. But He is not the Son, or the Father, they are different. And yet we see that both the Holy Spirit and God the Father spoke through the prophets. There is no distinction between them. In many instances, we see that God in some way communicates between Himself and the other persons in the Trinity in ways that we can't do. There is interpersonal communication within the Trinity. This distinguishes our God from other gods. If we understand the interpersonal communication of the Trinity, we will realize just how amazing it is we have a god like our God.)

Some Bad Illustrations

- Water
- Sun *(gives off radiation, light, and heat. Where does the radiation come from? This emanates from the Sun. The light rays and the heat are just created by the Sun. This equates to Jesus and the Holy Spirit as just created by God the Father.)*
- Human Father *(One is a father, a husband, a son. Not a very good illustration to understanding the Trinity. Not the way that God works.)*
- Egg *(The shell, the white, and the yolk. Doesn't work if people like scrambled eggs.)*

Wrong views of the Trinity

- **Modalism** – God is one, but at various times reveals Himself in different modes, forms, and times.

(This is not what the Trinity is. The Trinity is three persons that exist simultaneously, eternally, and are to be worshipped as three persons not as one thing that shows itself in different ways.)

(Using illustrations, is helpful to use these metaphors with someone who is really having a hard time understanding the Trinity. As long as you give a precaution saying this doesn't fully express what God is like. And it is not a contradiction. One God in three persons is a logical impossibility. But it is not. Take the illustration of water, it is not logically impossible for it to be vapor, to be liquid, and to be solid. This can happen. And does happen. But is this a perfect illustration of the Trinity? Definitely not. It is not a logical fallacy to say that there are 3 persons in one God.)

- **Arianism** – God is one, but Jesus as the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit was created by the Father, and are not of the same substance.

(A debate that happened 300 years after Jesus. People had a hard time understanding how God could be three persons but still be one God. Arius wanted to make things simpler, by deciding that God the Father created the other two. This is not biblical. This is a heresy.)

-
- **Partialism** – God is found in three parts which together constitute the Godhead.

(Part of God is the Father, part of God is the Son, part of God is the Holy Spirit. Put them all together to make a whole and you get, God. This is not true. Each one is completely God, but also who they are as a person in the Trinity. God can't be divided up into three parts. This is not biblical.)

Right view of the Trinity

(One of the three main creeds of the very early church in 500 AD. The church was dealing with this question for a couple hundred years. The Athanasian Creed was the best description of what the church fathers decided on about the Trinity. The Athanasian Creed was put together to be able to gather what Scripture said about the Trinity in an organized way. They made the Creed so that the Trinity would be more comprehensible.)

Athanasian Creed:

“That we worship one God in trinity and the trinity in unity, neither blending their persons nor dividing their essence.

For the person of the Father is a distinct person, the person of the Son is another, and that of the Holy Spirit still another.

But the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal.”

Biblical support for the Trinity

Verses that:

- Refer to the three persons of the Godhead together *(Talks about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit in one verse. And refers to them in the same authority.)*
- Directly teach that Jesus is God
- Show Jesus doing things that God does *(Jesus was involved in the Creation, many things that Jesus did that only God can do. Jesus forgave sins, He did it with the same authority as God the Father. The only person who can forgive sin is God. When Jesus was forgiving sins, He did it with the same authority as God the Father.)*
- Directly teach that the Holy Spirit is God *(The Holy Spirit does the things that only God can do. If the Holy Spirit does these things, then He must be God.)*
- Show the Holy Spirit doing what God does

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,²⁰teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:19-20

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- “in the Name of”
(Singular. Not referring to plural names of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. One name, but three different entities.)
 - The Father, Son and the Holy Spirit do have one name: God.
(Indirect but powerful way to show that the Trinity is spoken of in the New Testament. Jesus was the one who set this.)
 - The concept of the Trinity is in the Bible.
(Just because the word Trinity isn’t in the Bible, doesn’t mean that the Trinity is not true. In the Great Commission, there is one name, three persons. Just like the Trinity, one God, three persons.)

...who are chosen ²according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood...

I Peter 1:1-2

(Peter is addressing the people he is writing to. Those who were chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, by the sanctifying work of the to obey Jesus Christ, etc. They are chosen through the mediacy of the three different people. We are chosen by God the Father through His foreknowledge, He knew beforehand that we would be saved. We are saved by the Holy Spirit through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. He cleanses us from sin. This is how we are made as part of the “chosen”. Jesus sprinkles us with His blood, we can have forgiveness because of His sacrifice. Who makes you part of the “chosen”? All three of the Trinity.)

- God the Father

-
- Holy Spirit
 - Jesus Christ

The Trinity all work together in order to accomplish our salvation
(You can't take out one of the Trinity and be saved. They are all working together even if they are 3 separate persons. But one God working together for our salvation.)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

II Corinthians 13:14

(Similar to a doxology that people sang as part of their worship. This is like an anointing to the people as Paul closes out the letter of Corinthians. In the early church, in order to communicate doctrine, they would sing it. It is easy to remember a song, the words will automatically be retained. This song talks about the Trinity.)

Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'

Genesis 1:26

- All three of the Trinity was also part of creation
("Us" here means the Trinity is communicating within themselves. In Hebrew, this is easily made into

singular, the word that is used is “El” meaning God. But “Elohim” is the plural word for “God”, meaning multiple Gods, 3 or more. Judaism is a monotheistic religion and yet God, when He is referred to in making Creation, He refers to Himself in the plural.)

but at the proper time manifested, even His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior, ⁴to Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Titus 1:3-4

- God is our savior. And so is Jesus.
- They are both God
- They are just one and the same – God the Father and God the Son

The use of the word “Elohim” for God

אל = El, god or God

(rarely used in the Old Testament. Always used with a moderator and the name is extended to add a name of God, example: El Shaddai)

אלהים = El + ohim (plural form)

(most often used in the bible)

(From the very beginning, God revealed Himself not just as a god with only one person, but always as a God with three persons. This has been consistent from Genesis 1 onwards.)

Discussion 2

What have you learned so far about the nature of the Trinity?

What strikes you as most important?

Biblical support for the Trinity

Verses that:

- Refer to the three persons of the Godhead together.
- Directly teach that Jesus is God
- Show Jesus doing things that God does
- **Directly teach that the Holy Spirit is God**
- Show the Holy Spirit doing what God does

The Holy Spirit is God

But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? ⁴While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.’

Acts 5:3-4

- They lied to the Holy Spirit and to God, Who is one and the same.

(Ananias and Sapphira wanted to receive a blessing by giving something of theirs. But they were going to sell it at a higher value and give just a portion of the sales. They lied to the Holy Spirit and to God, who is

one and the same. The Holy Spirit is God and not just a force. He is a person, He can be grieved, has a will, can accomplish things, chooses things.)

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;

John 14:16

(Jesus is leaving but has promised to send someone to them.)

*“I will ask the Father, and He will give you **“allos”** Helper, that He may be with you forever;”*

Allos = Another of the same kind, the same essence.

Heteros = Another of a different kind

how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Hebrews 9:14

- Only God is eternal.
(If the Holy Spirit was created by God, He would not be eternal.)
- The Holy Spirit existed from eternity past.
(The creation of the world happened at one point in time. When God created the world, the Holy Spirit was already around. The Holy Spirit is God and is eternal.)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Genesis 1:1-2

- The Holy Spirit was with God when He was creating the world
- The Holy Spirit existed before creation.

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.

Psalms 33:6

- ***Ruach*** – breath = spirit in Hebrew

The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

Job 33:4

- The Holy Spirit imparts life to us
(When dirt was formed and life was breathed into Adam, this is “ruach”.)
- He gives us both spiritual and physical life
(Without the Holy Spirit, we will not have physical life. The Holy Spirit is also the one who will make us born again)

You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the ground.

Psalms 104:30

-
- The Holy Spirit was involved in the creation of the world.

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. ¹¹For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

I Corinthians 2:10-11

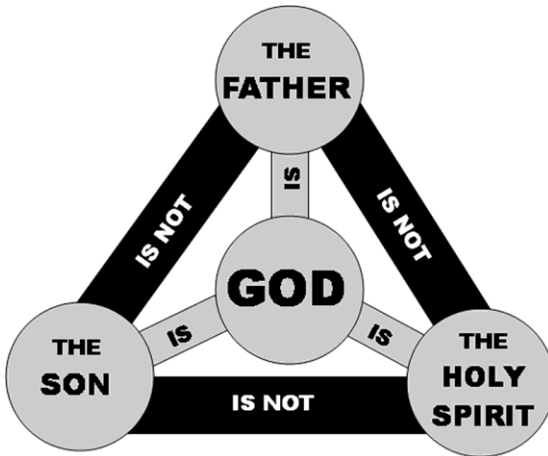
- Nobody can really understand God.
(God has greater knowledge of the intimate working of God Himself. Nobody can really understand God. We are just weak humans that have limitations.)
- The only Person who can really fully understand God is God Himself, the Holy Spirit. *(He has no limitations.)*

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. ⁵ The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”

John 1:1-5

(Jesus is as God is eternal. Jesus created everything at the creation because He is the Word and when the Word spoke, everything came into being. When God speaks, He speaks through the Holy Spirit, they are all involved in Creation. When Jesus came into the world, we could not comprehend or understand fully, who God is. The only one who can understand this is the Holy Spirit.)

Implications of the Trinity



- Communication within the Godhead
- Jesus is interceding for us in front of the throne of God.
- God is not lacking anything. He is complete within Himself.

(Other religions will have one god but no Trinity. Within their godhead, there is no communication or relationship. God is Love and created man so that He could have a relationship, there will be problem if there is no Trinity. But that would mean that God is lacking something. Can you imagine a God that is lacking? If God is lacking something, is He God? Does He need us to become complete so He can be God? God is not

lacking anything. Within the Trinity He already has a communication and a relationship. He is complete within Himself. He does not need external of Himself to be complete. This sets our God apart from other gods. The gods of these other religions, because they are not of the Trinity, they are not God. They are not complete of themselves and are not God.

God does not need a relationship with us, and yet He choose to send His Son to die for us. Not because He needs to. But because that is who He is as a God.)

Discussion 3

What is the significance for us as believers that there are three persons of the Trinity?

How would you communicate the importance and reality of the Trinity to a new believer?

The Trinity is a mystery

- Mysteries are by nature mysterious.
- Finite humans cannot conceive of how God can be one essence in three persons.
- The mystery is not illogical or contradictory.
- It is beyond our experience.

The Trinity changes everything

- If God needed to create people to fulfill His relational nature, He would be incomplete.
- If God's nature did not include relationships, He could be as fickle and arbitrary as the gods of the nations.
- Love, mercy, justice, righteousness, etc. are part of His relational nature, and make it possible for us to be saved.

EXPERIENCE

How should we respond?

1. The Trinity is a tricky truth to understand. Further digest what you have learned by answering the table. Once you know what is clear, indicate who you will share this to.

	What is clear?	What is not clear?	Who will you share the clear things to?
Jesus			
God the Father			
Holy Spirit			
Trinity			

2. As a result of what I have learned today, before next week I will....

Share with your group your personal application of this session. Pray together that God would allow you to follow through on your commitment.

SESSION 6

MARRIAGE AND

GENDER

MARRIAGE

EXPLORE

Find out how well you know these biblical couples and their circumstances by answering this fun trivia. Underline the letter of the correct answer.

1. What was the name of Abraham's wife?
a. Rachel b. Sarah c. Rebekah d. Leah
2. How was Isaac's wife chosen?
a. His father chose a local girl for him to marry
b. Isaac fell in love with his friend's daughter
c. His father sent a servant back to Mesopotamia to choose a wife from his own family
d. Isaac fell in love with his servant girl
3. Which of his wives did Jacob love the most?
a. Leah b. Zilpah c. Rachel d. Bilhah
4. What happened to Shechem, the prince who fell in love with Dinah, daughter of Jacob?
a. He married Dinah
b. He, his father, and the men of his city were slain by Dinah's brothers
c. He invited Dinah's family to live in his city
d. He eloped with Dinah, who never saw her family again
5. Where did Moses meet his future wife?
a. At a well in the land of Midian
b. In Pharaoh's palace in the land of Egypt
c. In the wilderness on the journey to the promised land
d. At the house of one of the Israelites

-
6. What were the restrictions on marriage for the daughters of Zelophehad?
 - a. They must only have one husband each
 - b. They must marry within their tribe
 - c. They must marry before the age of thirty
 - d. They must marry whoever is chosen by the priest for them

 7. What was the name of Ruth's second husband?
 - a. Elimelech
 - b. Mahlon
 - c. Chilion
 - d. Boaz

 8. Samson loved Delilah so much that she persuaded him to tell her what?
 - a. The secret of his strength
 - b. Where the Ark of God was
 - c. How to defeat the Israelites
 - d. How many Philistines he had killed

 9. What was the name of Abigail's first husband?
 - a. Goliath
 - b. Uzzah
 - c. Joash
 - d. Nabal

 10. What convinced David he was in love with Bathsheba, to the extent that he was prepared to commit adultery?
 - a. He saw her take a bath, and saw she was beautiful
 - b. He had dinner with her, and saw she was beautiful
 - c. He saw her with her husband, and saw she was beautiful
 - d. She was his servant, and he saw she was beautiful

 11. Who did Amnon love, and then hate even more than he had loved her?
 - a. Dinah
 - b. Tamar
 - c. Leah
 - d. Abigail

 12. Who told his wife not to worry that she was barren and said, "am not I better to thee than ten sons"?
 - a. Abraham
 - b. Jacob
 - c. Elkanah
 - d. Manoah

-
13. What was the occupation of Hosea's wife?
- a. Housekeeper
 - b. Dyer of cloth
 - c. Harlot
 - d. Money lender
14. Which married couple did Paul become friends with at Corinth?
- a. Ananias & Sapphira
 - b. Aquila & Priscilla
 - c. Jason & Lydia
 - d. Peter & Mary
15. Of what is the husband's love for the wife a symbol?
- a. God's love for us
 - b. Christ's love for the church
 - c. Man's love for woman
 - d. Adam's love for Eve

(See Appendix for the Answer Key)

Why is this important?

- Family is one of our core values
- Family breakdown is rampant
- Our culture assumes, if two people love each other, sexual intimacy is normal
(The Philippines has basically the same morals as that of the west. There used to be a huge difference, but this has changed over the past 30 years. The same level of sexual involvement among non-marrieds exists in both the US and the Philippines; this is now the norm.)
- The LGBT movement is influencing global media and society *(Something has to be done to counter this influence.)*
- Many reject Christ because they see believers as judgmental and hypocritical

Even among Christians...

- Questions about divorce and remarriage, especially for new believers

(“Scrambled egg” relationships because situations are so complicated. Ex. Before a couple comes to Christ, they already had an annulment, or had abandoned their spouse, and their spouse is also now remarried. There are kids from 3 different marriages. How do you fix this? The relationship is so scrambled, how do you pull the “eggs” apart? But rather than separating the eggs, we need to seek God’s hand because going back to ground zero is not applicable anymore.)

- Christians also struggle with sexual identity

(In the Philippines, a lot of Christians are reaching out and loving people from the LGBTQIA+ Community--this should be the norm. There are many that come from this background and come to know the Lord, but do not know how to live out their faith.)

- Lack of openness about gender issues causes people to hide struggles

(People generally try to hide these issues. But it is often best to address issues and work these out before the Lord. Ask God for wisdom and strength so that one can follow God’s will rather than hiding and pretending everything is all right.)

- Tendency to judge and condemn

(Condemn the sin, but not condemning the person that is caught in that sin.)

Discussion 1

Do you know people who have experienced broken marriages or families? What are their questions and struggles?

Have you known people who struggle with sexual identity? How does that affect their faith in Christ?

What should we know?

CCF Statement of Faith for Marriage

We believe that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Genesis 2:18-25) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4)

I. God's Design

Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'
²⁷God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 1:26-27

Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Genesis 2:7

Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper **suitable for him.**'

Genesis 2:18

(In all the previous times that God has created something, He declared that it was good. And when He finished creating everything, He said it was very good. The only time He said things were not good was when Adam was alone. How did God solve this problem? By making Adam a helper, suitable to him.)

- The original Hebrew word is, עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ “ezer kenegdo”, meaning, “a helper suitable”.

(English makes such a bad interpretation of this word and doesn't really get the full meaning in Hebrew. This word is also applied to God, He is our ezer kenegdo just like Eve is called an ezer kenegdo. This means that God is our support, and many passages of Scripture state that God will “strongly support” or “defend” us.)

- God has designed the wife to be a strong support that will help the man because it is not good for him to be alone.

(This word does not simply mean a “katulong” or “yaya”. This word means that this person who is called to help or to assist the man, is a strong support for the man. This doesn't mean that she is way below him and he is way above her. Nor does it mean that she is just going to serve him—it is much deeper than that. The roles of husband and wife might be different the man is still supposed to be the leader, but the wife is not merely a “katulong” to the leader.)

The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper **suitable for him**.²¹ So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.²² The Lord God **fashioned** into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.

Genesis 2:20-22

- Woman was “God fashioned,” or molded exactly the way that He wanted her to be.

(Why would God allow Adam to go and name all the animals and let him see that there is no suitable helper for him? Think about it, Adam spends a lot of time naming the animals and when he finishes he is tired. At the end, he does not find a helper suitable for him. Looking at all the animals, Adam probably felt that they could not give him what he needed which was companionship and a strong support.)

(God did not take her out of the dust like what He did with Man. He took Woman out of Man because she is a part of him. Woman is much different from the animals, and she is also much different from Man. God purposed it that Man and Woman would be integrally related.)

*“The man said,
‘This is now bone of my bones,
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called Woman,
Because she was taken out of Man.’”*

Genesis 2:23

-
- In Hebrew, this is an exclamation!

(Adam is saying, “Wow! This is awesome! This is so much better than all those other animals! This is what I was looking for!” God, in His object lesson was showing him that those animals were not what he was looking for.)

- God created Woman, exactly to be the right person for Adam.

(She was the right companion, the right complement to the Man.)

- From the very beginning, the intention of God was to create a couple, a Man and a Wife that would perfectly complement each other.

(It was not an accident. This happened before the Fall. It did not happen because there was a deficiency because Adam did something wrong. Rather, it was a deficiency because this was the way they were created.)

- This reflects the relational image of God as seen in the Trinity.

(There is a perfect relationship between them in the Godhead. God did not need to create Adam and Eve so he can be “complete”. God is perfectly sufficient in Himself because He has a relationship within the Godhead. To be made into the image of God we must

also be relational. This is our nature, to have a relationship. This is how God made us.)

*For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become **one flesh**.*

Genesis 2:24

- Being created in the image of God, they are one being - a reflection of how God is one with three persons.
- God never intended that the husband and wife would be separated. Later on, the Israelites were allowed to divorce but that was not the original intention!
- From the very beginning, the intention of the marriage relationship was to reflect what God is like, a perfect unity, that is never broken. This has implications for how we view divorce and re-marriage.

(Later on in Scriptures we see that the Israelites were allowed to divorce. But that was not the original intention! From the very beginning, the intention of the marriage relationship was to reflect what God is like, a perfect unity, that is never broken. This has implications for how we view divorce and re-marriage.)

*“Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, ‘Is it lawful for a man **to divorce** his wife **for any reason at all?**’⁴And He answered and said, ‘Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female,⁵and said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”?’⁶So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.*

⁷They said to Him, 'Why then did Moses **command** to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?' ⁸He said to them, 'Because of your hardness of heart Moses **permitted** you to divorce your wives; but **from the beginning it has not been this way.** ⁹And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, **except for immorality**, and marries another woman commits adultery.' ¹⁰The disciples said to Him, 'If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry.'"

Matthew 19:3-10

- During that time, it was acceptable in that culture to divorce.

(All a man had to do to divorce his wife was to give her a certificate of divorce and no questions asked, the divorce would be in effect. There was no need for a judge, no legal procedure involved.)

In Islamic culture, a man just needed two witnesses to make a divorce legal. There were similarities to their customs because this came from the Old Testament culture, where if you don't like your wife just divorce her and get another one. This was also the cultural background at the time when the Pharisees questioned Jesus about divorce.)

- In His answer, Jesus was saying that from the very beginning, the intention of marriage is for a permanent union. Divorce was never intended to be acceptable.

(The Pharisees persisted and asked why Moses allowed them divorce. And Jesus answered, that it was because of the hardness of their hearts.)

-
- Moses gave the certificate of divorce to protect the woman so that she could not be wrongly accused of adultery, and that she would have a legal document to support it.

(During the Levitical times, if you were caught in adultery, the punishment was stoning to death. Death is the consequence of adultery. This does not allow for those in adultery to divorce. This was not a command but was an exemption to the rule. It was NOT the norm but only acceptable under extenuating circumstances. In parallel passages, in Mark and Luke, this clause was not included.)

Parallel passages:

Some Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing Him, and began to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a wife. ³And He answered and said to them, 'What did Moses command you?' ⁴They said, 'Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.' ⁵But Jesus said to them, 'Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. ⁶But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. ⁷For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and the two shall become one flesh; so they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.'

Mark 10:2-9

*In the house the disciples began questioning Him about this again. ¹¹And He said to them, '**Whoever** divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; ¹²and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.'*"

Mark 10:10-12

(In the Matthew passage, it is indicated that if one commits adultery, the other party can divorce. In this passage, there is no mention of such a clause. The same goes for the next passage.)

Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.

Luke 16:18

- The is no escape clause here; the passage is clear, that marrying after getting divorced is adultery. This is for everyone with no exceptions.

(This has a lot of implications on the way we address divorce and re-marriage in CCF. We have scrambled egg relationships that cannot be separated and undone. But we have to be careful in saying that there is a biblical basis for divorce.)

- What is expected from God's side is marriage relationships should stay together permanently.

(People are looking for a justification for divorce in the Matthew passage. Jesus' intention was to go back to the original intention of marriage, which is that the two would stay married forever. Divorce was never meant to happen.)

- God desires forgiveness and restoration for every marriage relationship facing challenges and difficulties.

*But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband ¹¹(but if she does leave, she must **remain unmarried**, or else **be reconciled** to her husband), and that the husband should **not divorce his wife**.*

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

- Context: Paul was speaking to the Corinthians who came from a very pagan environment.

(This is the most often cited passage on defining whether it is okay to divorce or not. Many were Gentiles and as part of their worship of Diana, they had temple prostitutes and had highly sexualized, ritualistic way of worshipping.)

These people were very exposed to immorality since they were young. The situation was that some of them are already coming to Christ but their spouses were still not believers.)

- Paul's advice

Paul was answering the question, "how do you deal with this?". if you marry and unbeliever, do not divorce them. And if you do divorce them, remain unmarried. Potentially, the person can come to Christ and the relationship can be restored again. So you want to be in the condition that this is still a possibility.)

*But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he **must not** divorce her. ¹³And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she **must not** send her husband away."*

1 Corinthians 7:12-13

-
- Paul's opinion: don't divorce your unbelieving spouse if they are willing to stay together

(Seek to continue working on the relationship, because it might be the believer who will sanctify the relationship and bring their unbelieving spouse to Christ. Don't divorce just because the situation is hard.)

Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace.

1 Corinthians 7:15

- If the unbelieving party wants to divorce, you cannot do anything about it.

(Believers and followers of Christ should not be the one to initiate divorce)

*Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. ²⁰And so I direct in all the churches... Each man must **remain in that condition in which he was called.***

1 Corinthians 7:17,20

- Don't try to unscramble scrambled eggs.
(We can't undo what has happened in the past.)
- Strive to have a Christ-centered relationship from this point forward.

(If it is possible to reconcile with the separated party, this is highly encouraged.)

- The basic tenor of Scripture is marriage is a permanent union between a man and a wife.
(Are there exceptions? Yes, but really, the intent of Jesus is for married couples to stay together until they die.)
- Don't look for a way out of the marriage
(If you want to live in the way Jesus wanted, don't look for a way out of the marriage. The right way to approach marriage is to think, "How do we make this work? How do we reconcile? How do we forgive? How do we continue as a married couple?")

"Irreconcilable Differences?"

I have known many happy marriages, but never a compatible one. The whole aim of marriage is to fight through and survive the instant when incompatibility becomes unquestionable. For a man and a woman, as such, are incompatible.

G. K. CHESTERTON

(It is really a struggle for husbands and wives to get along. A lot of cases for divorce and annulment state incompatibility for that reason. These couples are indeed incompatible simply because one party is a man and the other is a woman.)

- Jesus' intent is for us to be more like Christ. And often it is conflict and friction that makes Christlikeness happen. God's intent is for marriage to be a permanent union until death.

II. Marriage – A Permanent Covenant

A. Marriage was God's idea; it is integral to who we were created to be.

- Being single does not mean that one is incomplete.

(A single person must live out their singleness to the best of their capacity as a family member, church member, dgroup leader, dgroup member, worker, etc.)

1. It is a reflection of His Triune nature

- The unity of the Trinity can never be broken. This is why marriages should not end in divorce.

2. It is at the center of spiritual warfare – the focus of the rebellion of Satan

- Satan attacks the husband and wife.
(His very intention is to divide. Don't be surprised that in a marriage relationship that it is always a war, not against the other person but it is always spiritual warfare.)
- it is always spiritual warfare.
(Satan doesn't want you as husband and wife to reflect the unity of the Triune God. When we are divided, he wins. To show that unity is not possible, Satan wins. We lose. That is why marriage is a struggle.)

III. CCF Policy on Remarriage

- A. CCF encourages couples whenever possible to seek forgiveness and reconciliation
1. For those who cannot reconcile, in general we recommend separation, not divorce/annulment
 2. For those in a second relationship, we generally do not perform re-marriages
 3. Exceptions are considered by the elders on a case-to-case basis.
- B. Some common questions
1. “If we are in love, then what is wrong with being physically intimate?”
 - Sex is part of God’s design. He made this for procreation, for unification as a couple, but is specific for the marriage relationship.
 - We need to follow God’s plan.
(And not make up our own plans regarding God’s design for things.)
 - Pre-marital sex actually damages relationships later on.
(People today don’t see anything wrong with pre-marital sex. Pre-marital sex actually damages relationships later on. People who have been living together and then get married after have a higher divorce rate.)

-
- People who engage in pre-marital sex have less sexual satisfaction than those who have been married for many years.
(One can mess with God's plan but don't expect it to work out well.)
 - Pre-marital sex is not honoring to God.
(We say we want to follow Christ, but don't do what He designed for us to do.)

2. "How will we know if we are compatible?"

- Josh McDowell says, "The plumbing almost always works". The physical attributes of sex will almost always work.
(A relationship will only extend until where you are willing to build the relationship.)

3. "What if we are no longer in love?"

(A common question is, "How can I stay in a relationship with someone that I am just not in-love with?" The preconception is very wrong here-- that love is a feeling)

- Love is not a feeling. Love is essentially a commitment that we make to love another person.
- Feelings are not the determinant of whether you will stay committed in a relationship.

(In marriage, feelings come and go. After a big fight you might not be feeling as in-love as before. But this will come and go; the commitment of the relationship is not based on

a fleeting feeling of being in-love at the moment.)

4. “What about abusive relationships?”

(It is never advisable for those who are in abusive, especially physically abusive relationships to stick it out with the abuser-spouse.)

- One needs to be protected and leave the situation for a period of time to be able to get help.

(Avoid telling people in abusive relationships that you will just pray for them. Do it at a distance, where they can't hurt you. One can take a step back with a counselor, with a discipler, to help you through that.)

- But this is not grounds for divorce. This is just a chance to step back from the relationship to be able to reboot.
- For physical abuse, get out of the situation and seek to address the issues that caused this abuse. For verbal abuse, seek counseling and get disciplers involved.

Discussion 2

How would you counsel an unmarried couple who feels there is nothing wrong with being intimate?

Under what circumstances would you say that divorce is acceptable biblically? What about separation? What about remarriage?

EXPERIENCE

How should we respond?

1. The World has many lies that make our minds not believe in God's truth. Name the lies of the World about Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage. For each lie, give the biblical truth. Then write down names of who you will share this to.

	Wordly Lies	Biblical Truths	Who you will share this to
Marriage			
Divorce			
Remarriage			

2. As a result of what I have learned today, before next week I will...

Share with your group your personal application of this session. Pray together that God would allow you to follow through on your commitment.

GENDER

EXPLORE

Take turns in sharing to the group your thoughts or opinion on the following:

1. What will be your reaction if your child or someone you care about admits that he is a gay/lesbian? Why?
2. How will you respond to this situation?

What should we know?

Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, CCF will only recognize and solemnize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman who are committed to follow Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as biologically male or biologically female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Genesis 1:26-27) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

(500 years ago, the question of being male or female was never ambiguous. Your biology defined you. When you take a baby home from the hospital, you know obviously what that baby is based on the anatomy. Today, we are being taught that our identity is being made up of our conscious selves. Who you are may not be your physical make up. Who you are is what you think you are. But this doesn't make it true. We do not make ourselves into what we are to be. This is not something we developed. God is the one who assigned this identity to us.

For 150 years now, we are now empowered to make up our own reality. We can make up the truth for ourselves. We can be whatever we choose to be. This is the creation of our own consciousness. Gender dysphoria is when we are trying to find out for ourselves who we are. These and others have made it confusing for people to find out what they really are.

As Christians, our stand must be as God created us, then that is what we are.)

I. God's Design

Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' ²⁷*God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

Genesis 1:26-27

(It is clear that God is always associated as a "He" and never referred to as a "She". How then do we propagate God's image if man is presented as "male" and "female".)

A. What is God's Image?

1. Moral

(We have a sense of right and wrong. We get this from God.)

2. Intellectual

(God thinks, He is an independent thinker. We also think. We can reason. God tells us we can reason together you and I. There are even times in scripture that people argue with God. This seems futile but still doable because we have been given the capacity by God.)

3. Creative

(People can think a lot of creative things and even make them. This is the way God is, He also creates.)

4. Spiritual

(We are spiritual beings, this sets us apart from the animals.)

5. Relational

(God in the Trinity has a relationship within the triune godhead. He is in Himself relational.)

The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

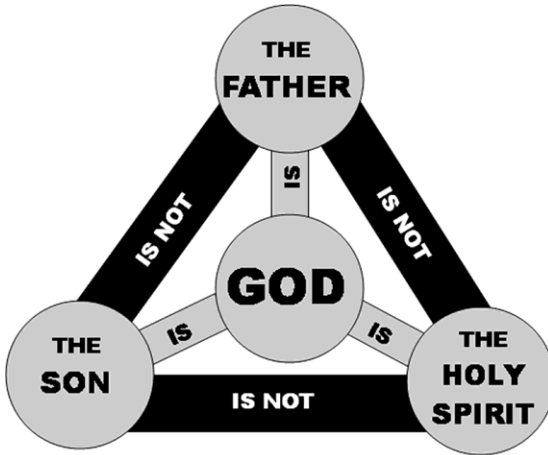
Genesis 2:20

So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.²²The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. “

Genesis 2:21-22

(He chose a woman to be with a man, it was to show the kind of relationship that a was within the Trinity. Three relational beings in the Godhead.)

B. God's Nature: Trinity



(The relationship is in between people like Him but not exactly like Him. In Man and Woman, they are alike but not exactly a reflection of each other. Different, but able to have relationship with each other.)

- Man and woman are different from one another and complement each other.
(If God only made man in the world, it would be a disaster. Man only reflects one type of nature of human being. If there were only women, it would also be a disaster.)
- These differences reflect the image of God, just like the Godhead is one but different from each other.

God's nature is Triune – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Each person of the Godhead is different, but each is in perfect relationship with each other.

Man in the image of God is also relational – but his most intimate relationship cannot be with someone that is the same as himself.

- Man and man or woman and woman cannot reflect the image of God.

(This just wouldn't work. Two women cannot reflect the image of God because they are the same. This cannot work.)

But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband.”

I Corinthians 7:2

- God's intention for sex has always been man and woman, a husband and wife, within the confines of marriage.

C. Is homosexual sex sin?

1. Scripture says repeatedly that it is.

For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,²⁷ and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one

another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

Romans 1:26-27

- Man disobeyed God; sin (lawlessness and rebellion) was never God's intent for man.

realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers¹⁰and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching...

I Timothy 1:9-10

If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.

Leviticus 20:13

Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable.

Leviticus 18:22

-
- The sin of homosexuality is not worse than any other sin. The penalty for homosexuality is the same penalty for children who disrespect their parents.

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.¹¹ Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

- In all these passages, homosexuality is not singled out as a unique sin. This is in the same category as disobedience and drunkenness.
2. What is worse than homosexuality?

In addition to homosexuality, there are numerous sinful behaviors that are condemned. These include: murder, swindling, adultery, immorality, fornication, perjury, stealing, kidnapping, idolatry, lying, being covetous, drunkenness, or reviling.

- There is no hierarchy of how bad a sin is. They are all in the same category as disobedience to God.
- There is a wrong perception on homosexuality that it is the worst kind of sin. They are all at the same level.

3. Who is a worse sinner?

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:19-21

- In this passage, homosexuality is not mentioned but it is listed under the general sin of immorality.
- As Christians we have been guilty of making homosexuality far worse than any other sin.
- This is unfortunately reflected in our judgment of people.
(Case in point, we can accept somebody who lies or gossips but can't accept someone who is gay. There is an inconsistency.)
- We are also guilty of thinking that homosexuality is worse than the sin we commit. This is why homosexuals feel judged and condemned by Christians.

Straightening up, Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?’ ¹¹She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said, ‘I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.’

John 8:10-11

- Jesus doesn’t excuse the sin of the woman.
(He doesn’t downplay that she was caught in the act of adultery.)
- Jesus doesn’t condemn her.
(If we want to emulate Jesus, we have to do the same thing.)
- When we see people sin, we have to be able to call out the sin and hold off on the condemnation.
- Love the person because this is what Jesus would have done.

In summary

- Homosexual sex is sin.
(Two people of the same sex having sex is a sin.)
- Clearly representing oneself as the opposite sex, when they are not such is sin.
- We should not reject the humanity of other people and condemn them.

(This does not include people who are effeminate and are just not “macho” by society’s standards. But regardless, we should not reject the humanity of other people and condemn them.)

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- Jesus is our prime example, in Romans 5:8, it states that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

D. Some Common Questions

1. Is attraction to the same sex sin?
 - No. Attraction to a person of the same sex is not sin. Sin is acting on the attraction and having sexual relations with the person of the same sex.
 - Temptation is not sin. Giving in to the temptation and acting out on the temptation is sin.
2. What is wrong with having a committed same sex relationship?
 - God's intention for a marriage is for man and woman.
 - Even if we insist that there is no difference with homosexual relationships, one will see that the biology clearly states differently.
(Because it is different, the relationship is different and the marriage will be different.)
3. What if I have tried to change but I just can't?
 - One's goal is to act purely before God.
(Your goal is not to change your attraction to a person or gender. One's goal is to act purely before God. There have been cases where gay

people would pursue a straight life, get married and have kids. The assumption is that they are no longer attracted to people of the same sex.)

- It is possible to be attracted to the opposite sex and to the same sex. The goal is not to eliminate the attraction. The goal is to live according to the design of God.
 - If you are struggling with trying to change but not changing, you have two options:
 - a. Live a celibate life. Honor God by keeping yourself pure by not having sexual relations with anyone for life.
 - b. Wait for God to change you. This may not happen instantly but in the meantime, commit to being pure.
4. If I don't speak out against homosexuality, am I not condoning it?
- Check yourself, are you speaking out the same way against other sins such as lying?
(Should we stone all liars to death? Then we would all be dead. Nothing good happens if we speak out so vehemently against a sin.)
 - Loving people, lovingly confronting their sinful behavior, but not condemning them and bringing them to faith in Christ, is a much more productive way of to address things.

(Having sex with a person of the same sex, homosexual sex, being transgender, is clearly

sin. Acting out on your impulses that are against the design of God that is against the Bible is sin.

We also need to extend grace to gays and have compassion for gays. Without condoning the sin and not condemning them but drawing them into a relationship with Christ.)

- God will deal with the sin, our job is bridge people to Christ.
- We need to extend more grace than usual to the LGBTQ community.

Discussion 3

How would you respond to a gay person who says they don't want to believe in Christ because they feel judged by Christians?

EXPERIENCE

How should we respond?

1. What are your perspectives about same-sex relationships before? What are your attitudes towards the LGBT community before? And now after this session, what changes occurred in your perspectives or attitudes towards them? Use the chart below to indicate those.

Before		After	
Perspective	Attitudes	Perspective	Attitudes
Ex. It is fine as long as they are happy	Condoning the homosexual act		

2. As a result of what I have learned today, before next week I will....

Share with your group your personal application of this session. Pray together that God would allow you to follow through on your commitment.