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UNIT II – *Six Ways* of a Missional Life

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Six Ways of a Missional Life

Welcome to the second season of Pilgrim Groups! This new series of studies builds on the foundation laid in the first season, which focused on understanding three aspects of the Gospel: Story, Identity, and Kingdom. During this second season, we will put feet to prior learning and begin in practical ways to give shape and expression to living our lives in rhythm with God's mission: connecting people by the Holy Spirit to Jesus.

These practical ways can best be described and understood as follows:

I. *Listening*

Learning to listen to God and considering how He speaks to us, putting our longings before Him without censorship, conversing with our Triune God about how best to engage ourselves – with His help – in His mission. Developing skills to listen to other people well, including the ability to hear both what they are actually saying and the message beneath their words.

II. *Story*

Articulating how our story and God's story intersect, learning to explain the Gospel to others by using major themes in our life story, being relevant as we share it so as to fit the person and scenario we find ourselves with and in. Learning to articulate the ways that God has been present in another person's story.

III. *Celebrate*

Discovering God's habit of celebrating life's moments and milestones with significant, memorable events that highlight and relish the joy of living in relationship with one another, exploration of Biblical celebrations, those in our culture, and in our families.

IV. *Bless*

Understanding the Biblical idea of 'blessing' and getting practice expressing this art with and toward others with a focus on increasing the brightness and honor of God and those around us.

V. *Eat*

Relishing the joy of eating while considering how Jesus used mealtimes as opportunities to gather, bless, teach, nurture, and enjoy relationships and to spiritually nurture people with the Gospel.

VI. *Sabbath*

Embracing the cosmic rhythm of 'work-rest' emphasizing the finished work of Jesus' Cross, its power and relevance to us, its basis as *our* rest, and how we reflect God's image by playing, restoring and creating beauty, living, and loving to His glory.

Group Rhythms

WHEN AND HOW THE STUDY WILL GO: (September, 2011 thru April, 2012)

Regularly: Meet as 'Pilgrim Group' – men and women meet separately:

- Discuss the Study
- Practice Hot Seat
- Pray

Goal: To nurture the mind and emotions toward understanding the 'six ways'

Regularly: Meet as 'Monastic Community' – co-ed with children, too:

- Practice PG Lesson
- Conversation Rooted in PG Study

Goal: To foster an environment in which people practice the *6 Ways* and consider their mission.

Occasionally: Organize events to connect friends into Monastic Community

This Pilgrim Group series is designed to unfold over a longer span of time (half a year) to provide opportunity for these 'six ways' to take root and bring fruit. Further, the groups are 'open' groups which allow others to join in at any point in the study. That these Six Ways are compatible with and an outworking of The Village values of 'truth,' 'accessibility,' and 'the disciplines' should be noted.

UNIT II – Six Ways of a Missional Life

WAY I: LISTENING (*Overview*)

Pilgrim Groups :

Studying the Art of Listening

Goal: *To help you and your group both to understand and engage our Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in ways that foster relevance, devotion, dependence, and guidance in individual and community mission efforts.*

Monastic Communities:

Practicing the Art of Listening

Goal: *To challenge you and your Monastic Community – now that you have studied and understand God-In-Three – to engage Him in relevant ways, discern His voice, interact with Him missionally, feel his compassion for people and their particular stories, and create space to talk with each other about our friends.*

Objectives:

One: Understand and embrace the Trinity by exploring various Trinitarian Bible passages.

Two: Engage the three persons of God (Father, Son, and Spirit) in Trinitarian prayer.

Three: Develop skills that will enable you to readily discern God’s voice and submit to Him.

Four: Empower you to interact with our Triune God in relevant, mission-focused ways.

Five: Challenge you to listen to secular persons’ stories while suspending censorship.

A Note from Pastor Jimmy:

Every day in our culture our senses are bombarded with excessive stimulation. Throughout a normal day, it is not unusual for each of us to encounter literally thousands of messages – media, TV, movies, songs, psyche-altering advertisements, relational exchanges, hip new technologies – most of which overload our capacities to process new information, dull and numb our perception of reality, and compete with and even silence the paramount still, quiet voice of our Triune God. We out of necessity learn to shut out the stammering voices of an obnoxious and viral culture and medicate ourselves with the meaningless chatter of noises we can at least control with the slide screens of our I-Phones, Pads, and Pods. So the irony is rich: to learn to listen is as much a lesson in learning not to listen as it is learning how and to what or more importantly, *to whom* we should listen.

This lesson is intended to teach us the art of *not listening* while learning afresh to *reorient our listening* toward the only Person truly worth listening to: a mysterious, eclectic, exotic, and awesome God-In-Three.

WAY I: LISTENING (*Prepare for Pilgrim Group*)

Studying the Art of Listening as Pilgrim Groups

Goal: *To help you and your group both to understand and engage our Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in ways that foster relevance, devotion, dependence, and guidance in individual and community mission efforts.*

What To Do Now: Set aside at least one (1) full hour to complete this lesson in preparation for your Pilgrim Group meeting.

Pray, asking the Holy Spirit to lead you into truth.

Next, read the passage slowly and silently several times.

Further, remain open to what He is revealing to you.

Finally, based on the passage, answer each question in the 'Considering the Text' and 'Prayer Journal' sections.

What To Do @ PG: Default: Allow flexibility so the Holy Spirit can guide.

Pray Around, asking each person to share how they're doing.

Next, read and review the Scripture passage.

Further, review the lesson and share your answers and insights.

Finally, practice praying to the Trinity, especially for personal, community mission.

John 14:6-10, 16-26

14:6 Jesus replied, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

14:7 If you have known me, you will know my Father too. And from now on you do know him and have seen him."

14:8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be content." **14:9** Jesus replied, "Have I been with you for so long, and you have not known me, Philip? The person who has seen me has seen the Father! How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? **14:10** Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you, I do not speak on my own initiative, but the Father residing in me performs his miraculous deeds. **14:16** Then I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever – **14:17** the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it does not see him or know him. But you know him, because he resides with you and will be in you. **14:18** "I will not abandon you as orphans, I will come to you. **14:19** In a little while the world will not see me any longer, but you will see me; because I live, you will live too. **14:20** You will know at that time that I am in my Father and you are in me and I am in you. **14:21** The person who has my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will reveal myself to him."

14:22 "Lord," Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "what has happened that you are going to reveal yourself to us and not to the world?" **14:23** Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and take up residence with him. **14:24** The person who does not love me does not obey my words. And the word you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. **14:25** "I have spoken these things while staying with you.

14:26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will cause you to remember everything I said to you.

Considering The Text – Understanding GOD IN THREE . . .

Study Questions:

NOTE: Historically, the church, from the days of early church fathers such as Tertullian, Athanasius, and Augustine, has understood the teaching of the 'Trinity' as a construct teaching, that is, one based on the whole of what Scripture reveals about God, Jesus, and The Holy Spirit and not just on one or even several passages. As such, we should understand the 'Trinity' this way: while the word itself is not found in Scripture, this way of understanding God is.

The teaching of the Trinity makes three affirmations: that there is but one God, and that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is each God (share the same divine essence), and that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is each a distinct Person. In short, God is three distinct Persons and one same divine essence.

This study intends not to unpack it, argue for or against it, or plummet the deep mysteries of this teaching. Rather, here our purposes are simply to embrace the teaching of God-In-Three and learn to listen to and pray to Him specific to each of His distinct, revealed Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Read John 14:6-10 and 16-26 slowly and reflectively. Overall, what strikes you about this passage? What major themes do you notice? Basically, what is going on here?

Mark all references (including related pronouns) to God the Father. **L**ist out the verses that speak about Him. **W**hat does each one say about God the Father?

Considering The Text – Understanding GOD IN THREE . . . cont.

Study Questions:

Mark all references (including related pronouns) to Jesus Christ. **L**ist these out. **W**hat does each one say about Him?

Mark all references (including related pronouns) to the Holy Spirit. **L**ist these out. **W**hat does each one say about Him?

How are the three Persons of God relating to each other? What is unique about their interrelation? What did you learn about God-In-Three from John 14 that was especially meaningful?

Prayer Journal

Write a response to God about what you believe He is asking you to **RECEIVE and BELIEVE** from this passage.

Write a response telling God about what **EMOTIONS** are stirred up in you as a result of studying this passage.

Tell God how you **LIVE** differently having been confronted with the truth of this passage?

What do you believe is the **MAIN THEME** of this passage? Briefly describe the story Jesus is telling here.

Interact with God about which **VERSE** was especially meaningful to you and why.
Write it on a memory card & keep it for reference.

WAY I: LISTENING *(as a Monastic Community)*

Practicing the Art of Listening as Monastic Communities

Goal: *To challenge you and your Monastic Community – now that you have studied and understand God-In-Three – to engage Him in relevant ways, discern His voice, interact with Him missionally, feel his compassion for people and their particular stories, and create space to talk with each other about our friends.*

What To Do: During your time together as a Monastic Community, you may wish to do some or all of the following activities in a way natural to those gathered:

Invite your not-yet-Christian friends!

Eat together.

Practice praying Trinitarian prayer together.

Enjoy directed conversation based on the last Pilgrim Group study.

Talk with each other about friends you know and pray for them.

Practice the art of ‘listening’ while others tell their story. Use ‘reflective listening’ and ‘clarifying questions’ to maximize experience.

NOTE: The group should have a few leaders who will keep the conversation on track and keep people accountable. These leaders will also help provide thematic continuity and basically work to tie various lessons together and integrate the ‘ways’ so that the Pilgrim Groups and Monastic Community can experience a holistic approach to these missional rhythms; in other words, to work at integrating these ‘ways’ into our habit of living and relating so that they begin to naturally flow out of us without our notice. Leaders may also shift the plan entirely so as to create accessibility for visitors to the group.

UNIT II – Six Ways of a Missional Life

WAY 2: STORY FORMATION (*Overview*)

Pilgrim Groups

Practicing the Art of Forming Our Story in Relation to God's Story

Goal: To help you articulate how your story and God's story intersect, learning to explain the Gospel to others by using major themes in our life story, being relevant as we share it so as to fit the person and scenario we find ourselves with and in.

Monastic Communities

Learning the Art of Telling Stories and Hearing Stories

Goal: To encourage you to practice the art of story-telling: your story and how it intersects with God's story, how your story fits into the Village's story, your friends stories and how they intersect with yours, God's and The Village's story while practicing Trinitarian prayer for those whose stories are being told.

Objectives:

One: Practicing articulating how our story and God's story intersect.

Two: Intentionally honing the skill of relevance as we share our stories with others.

Three: Discovering the mega-narrative of Scripture: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration and seeing how our story intersects with each theme.

Four: Praying via the Trinitarian model of prayer for ourselves and our friends.

A Note from Pastor Jimmy:

Our story is intimately connected with God's story. Both narratives begin in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve find themselves raised up from creation dust with living breathe and a vital connection with God. Once in harmony with God, they are quickly estranged from Him. Genesis 3:10 highlights the conflict. As God is seeking them, calling out, Adam replies "I heard you moving about in the orchard, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." Love, Adam's core emotion, changes to fear because he is naked and terrified of exposure and rejection. His strategy is to hide from God. And so humankind has done ever since.

Discovering our story is not an amiable exercise but a terrifying one. This is so because we are confronted with who we are under God, a prospect that demands we risk absolute exposure and thus absolute rejection. And so we make it our life motive to hide from each other and God because we cannot bear the rejection. Curiously, the most broken, contorted areas of our lives provide the brightest opportunity for repair. The challenge related to writing our story is to overcome the disabling fear of rejection and the crippling by-product of shame, thus positioning our life 'repair' as a venue for broadcasting the Gospel.

WAY 2: STORY FORMATION (*Prepare for Pilgrim Group*)

Practicing the Art of Forming Our Story in Relation to God's Story as Pilgrim Groups

Goal: To help you articulate how your story and God's story intersect, learning to explain the Gospel to others by using major themes in our life story, being relevant as we share it so as to fit the person and scenario we find ourselves with and in.

What To Do Now: Set aside at least one (1) full hour to complete this lesson in preparation for your Pilgrim Group meeting.

Pray, asking the Holy Spirit to lead you into truth.

Next, read the passage slowly and silently several times.

Further, remain open to what He is revealing to you.

Finally, based on the passage, answer each question in the 'Considering the Text' and 'Prayer Journal' sections.

What To Do @ PG: Default: Allow flexibility so The Holy Spirit can guide.

Pray Around, asking each person to share how they're doing.

Next, read and review the Scripture passage.

Further, review the lesson and share your stories with each other.

Finally, practice praying to the Trinity, especially for personal and community mission.

Considering The Text – **STORY FORMATION** - Telling God's Story

It will be helpful if you use a study Bible with notes (for example, the NIV Study Bible is a good one) for this lesson. Alternately, see Appendix 4 for good websites to use in exploring this information.

Study Questions:

Read Acts 7:1-53 carefully while considering the study Bible text notes. Based on the content and references within the passage, to whom is Stephen speaking? What is the theme of the story he is sharing?

How does the story Stephen shares connect with and implicate his audience? Why does he tell the story the way he does?

Based on Stephen's approach to tailor his message to his audience, how would you 'tailor' your story to your various friends? In what ways would you tell your story differently to different people?

Bold as it is, is Stephen's indictment of his Hebrew audience necessary? Why do you suppose he took such a colossal risk? Why was the outcome (his martyrdom) so severe?

What fears do you have as you consider broadcasting your story (and the way it illustrates God's story) to others?

Considering The Text – Story Formation – Telling God’s Story, cont.

Study Questions:

Read Acts 26:1-32 carefully while considering the study Bible text notes. Based on the content and references within the passage, to whom is Paul speaking? What is the theme of the story he is sharing?

How does the story Paul shares connect with and implicate his audience? Why does he tell the story the way he does?

Compare and contrast both Paul’s and Stephen’s stories. What themes stand out? What are basic differences in each approach? Describe how each story is tailored to fit the audience and situation.

As you consider Paul and Stephen, describe each person’s emotional tone. How did it impact their audiences? Was it negative or positive? Necessary or not?

How do their emotional tones impact you? With regards to you sharing your story with friends, what emotional tone would be most natural for you?

Prayer Journal

Write a response to God about what you believe He is asking you to **RECEIVE and BELIEVE** from this passage.

Write a response telling God about what **EMOTIONS** are stirred up in you as a result of studying this passage.

Tell God how you **LIVE** differently having been confronted with the truth of this passage?

What do you believe is the **MAIN THEME** of this passage? Briefly describe the story Jesus is telling here.

Interact with God about which **VERSE** was especially meaningful to you and why.
Write it on a memory card & keep it for reference.

Pilgrim Group Action:

Pray specifically about the things you learned in this study, about truths revealed in Acts 7 and 26.

Take turns sharing your stories especially as they intersect with God's story.

Talk about how you might tell your story differently if you could tell it to someone else's friends.

Tell your story in the context of the Village. How has participation in this particular community of God transformed you?

WAY 2: STORY FORMATION *(as a Monastic Community)*

Learning the Art of Telling Stories and Hearing Stories as Monastic Communities

Goal: To encourage you to practice the art of story-telling: your story and how it intersects with God's story, how your story fits into the Village's story, your friends stories and how they intersect with yours, God's and The Village's story while practicing Trinitarian prayer for those whose stories are being told.

What To Do: During your time together as a Monastic Community, you may wish to do some or all of the following activities in a way natural to those gathered:

Invite your not-yet-Christian friends!

Eat together.

Practice praying Trinitarian prayer together, especially focused on the person sharing their story that night.

Enjoy directed conversation about The Village story. How did you come to The Village? What drew you? Why do you stay?

Talk with each other about friends. Tell their stories to each other.

Talk about why your friends have their particular story. What is their world view? What are their skepticisms about the gospel?

UNIT II – Six Ways of a Missional Life

WAY 3: CELEBRATION (*Overview*)

Pilgrim Groups

Discovering God's habit of celebrating life's moments

Goal: Discovering God's habit of celebrating life's moments and milestones with significant, memorable events that highlight and relish the joy of living in relationship with one another, exploration of Biblical celebrations, those in our culture, and in our families.

Monastic Communities

Practicing God's habit of celebrating with each other

Goal: Giving expression to the art of celebrating life's defining moments by throwing parties, attending them, and making them better. In view is also studying Tucsonan culture and trying to figure out where people gather to celebrate, around what, and why.

Objectives:

- One:** Studying Scripture and focusing on feasts, parties, and other occasions when people rested from life's normal rhythm to celebrate.
- Two:** Discovering how our own culture celebrates and why and joining them, with a view of making the party better.
- Three:** Integrating the art of celebrating into our own lives as individuals, families, and community.
- Four:** Learning to talk about our celebrations as expressions of our faith.

A Note from Pastor Jimmy:

We've all experienced it. Being at a festive event and losing track of reality and believing, if for only a little while, that life with all its cares had somehow gone away, leaving us to relish the joyous moments of being together with those we enjoy around a grand moment or theme of celebration.

Heaven on earth, really.

And that is what God intends, namely, to give us some practice at celebrating the victory of grace, the Cross, and the wedding feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9); for soon we will be guests at such a feast. All creation is heading for this grand climax and so it is fitting that we should get some practice now.

Scripture is replete with moments, events, and milestones captured and celebrated with zeal and joyous pomp. Each speaks of some rich aspect of God's redeeming love while allowing space amid life's business to suspend the cares of a broken world in order that we may align ourselves with the rhythm of heaven.

Celebration is a theme of God's Kingdom and a rhythm to be learned in preparation for the Grand Day!

WAY 3: CELEBRATION (*Prepare for Pilgrim Group*)

Discovering God's habit of celebrating life's moments as Pilgrim Groups

Goal: Discovering God's habit of celebrating life's moments and milestones with significant, memorable events that highlight and relish the joy of living in relationship with one another, exploration of Biblical celebrations, those in our culture, and in our families.

What To Do Now: Set aside at least one (1) full hour to complete this lesson in preparation for your Pilgrim Group meeting.

Pray, asking the Holy Spirit to lead you into truth.

Next, read the passage slowly and silently several times.

Further, remain open to what He is revealing to you.

Finally, based on the passage, answer each question in the 'Considering the Text' and 'Prayer Journal' sections.

What To Do @ PG: Default: Allow flexibility so the Holy Spirit can guide.

Pray Around, asking each person to share how they're doing.

Next, read and review the Scripture passage.

Further, review the lesson and share your stories with each other.

Finally, practice praying to the Trinity, especially for personal and community mission.

Scripture Study

Select from the following study materials to answer the questions on the following pages:

A Concordance

A Study Bible

A Topical Bible

A Bible Dictionary

Internet Bible Study Resources (see Appendix 4).

Considering The Text – **CELEBRATION** – Sharing in God's Joy

Study Questions:

Using a **Concordance** or the **Search The Bible** search bar at blueletterbible.org (see appendix 4), look up the following words and count their frequency in Scripture (both Old and New Testament):

Celebration and Celebrate

Feast(s) and Feast Day(s)

Wedding

Read a handful of verses from each of the words referenced. What are similarities and differences in each occasion and context? Are there any themes you see across the board?

Use a Topical Bible or online Bible resources (see appendix 4) to do some reading/exploring about Biblical celebrations, feasts and weddings. Summarize your learning in a brief paragraph.

Considering The Text – CELEBRATION - Sharing in God's Joy, cont.

Use a Study Bible or Google (type "Old Testament festivals and feasts" into the search bar) to research Hebrew feast days. How many are there? List them and describe what each one is, when it was celebrated, and what it teaches about who God is and how He relates to His people.

Take two of these Feast Days that are of particular interest to you and using a Bible Dictionary or an internet Bible study resource (see appendix 4), look them both up and read about them. How do you understand Jesus and God's grace and the Holy Spirit in new ways?

Overall, what sense do you get from studying Biblical feasts, celebrations, and weddings? What new insights have you gained from this study?

As you study the Tucsonan culture, what are some ways people in our culture celebrate? List them. Why do people gather around and celebrate these things? What can you learn about people from this cultural study?

Prayer Journal

Write a response to God about what you believe He is asking you to **RECEIVE and BELIEVE** from this passage.

Write a response telling God about what **EMOTIONS** are stirred up in you as a result of studying this passage.

Tell God how you **LIVE** differently having been confronted with the truth of this passage?

What do you believe is the **MAIN THEME** of this passage? Briefly describe the story Jesus is telling here.

Interact with God about which **VERSE** was especially meaningful to you and why.
Write it on a memory card & keep it for reference.

Pilgrim Group Action:

Pray specifically about the things you learned in this study, about truths revealed in your study of Biblical feasts, celebrations, and weddings.

Take turns sharing your perspective on celebrations in your own life, your family's, and church.

Be sure to pray and talk about how our culture in Tucson celebrates. Which of these could you join? How would you make it better? In what ways could you bring your story and the Gospel to bear?

WAY 3: CELEBRATION *(as a Monastic Community)*

Practicing God's habit of celebrating with each other as Missional Communities

Goal: Giving expression to the art of celebrating life's defining moments by throwing parties, attending them, and making them better. In view is also studying Tucsonan culture and trying to figure out where people gather to celebrate, around what, and why.

What To Do: During your time together as a Monastic Community, you may wish to do some or all of the following activities in a way natural to those gathered:

Invite your not-yet-Christian friends!

Eat together.

Enjoy directed conversation about how God celebrates his victories and how we can join Him in it by celebrating:

Birthdays Holidays Public Events Parties

*Use Pastor Jimmy's mantra: "Everywhere I go, I make things better."
A believer should always strive to do this: make a party better, bring the best food, best drinks, best conversation, best everything. This is for the sake of pointing people to Jesus and illustrating God's lavish creativity.*

Practice talking about how celebration is an expression of your faith.

And for heaven's sake, PARTY!

UNIT II – Six Ways of a Missional Life

WAY 4: BLESS (*Overview*)

Pilgrim Groups

Discovering the Biblical concept of 'blessing'

Goal: To understand the Biblical idea of 'blessing' and getting practice expressing this art with and toward others with a focus on increasing the brightness and honor of God and those around us.

Monastic Communities

Practicing the Biblical concept of 'blessing'

Goal: To intentionally express blessing to others through words, gifts, and actions while being cognizant of how we are both recipients and disseminators of blessing.

Objectives:

- One:** Uncovering the veil of biblical blessing by studying various passages containing stories about real people who were blessed in order to be a blessing.
- Two:** Embracing as part of our identity the truth that we are objects of blessing and therefore people who offer that which we ourselves have received.
- Three:** Expressing the biblical art of blessing by speaking, offering, and living blessing in a way that tangibly impacts people's lives around us.

A Note from Pastor Eric:

Proverbs 18:21 tells us that death and life are in the power of the tongue. This concept has resounded with me since I first heard it. It's amazing to think that what I say might actually produce life or death in another person. The ancient Hebrews believed that our words had a life of their own, and truly, when words leave our mouths, we lose control of their lasting impact for good or for harm. Isaiah 55:11 speaks of God's words going out and accomplishing his purposes, and we see this reality in the Genesis account of creation as well. This mysterious power of words causes the writer of Ephesians to urge us guard our speech such that we only speak in the best interest of other people (4:29), benefitting them and building them up. As we think about the element of blessing people that relates to our words, we need to approach what we say with intention and careful consideration of the people around us so that we can make the most of this powerful, God-given force.

WAY 4: BLESS (*Prepare for Pilgrim Group*)

Discovering the Biblical concept of 'blessing' as Pilgrim Groups

Goal: To understand the Biblical idea of 'blessing' and get practice expressing this art with and toward others with a focus on increasing the brightness and honor of God and those around us.

What To Do Now: Set aside at least one (1) full hour to complete this lesson in preparation for your Pilgrim Group meeting.

Pray, asking the Holy Spirit to lead you into truth.

Next, read the passage slowly and silently several times.

Further, remain open to what He is revealing to you.

Finally, based on the passage, answer each question in the 'Considering the Text' and 'Prayer Journal' sections.

What To Do @ PG: Default: Allow flexibility so the Holy Spirit can guide.

Pray Around, asking each person to share how they're doing.

Next, read and review the Scripture passage.

Further, review the lesson and share your stories with each other.

Finally, practice praying to the Trinity, especially for personal, community mission.

Scripture Study

The core of the PG group lesson this week is a self-guided learning experience in which you will uncover and discover understanding in regards to the following:

- The biblical meaning of the word/concept of 'blessing.'
- Some biblical stories that teach us about blessing.
- How blessing flows into our lives.
- What it might look like for you to intentionally bless those around you through words, gifts, actions.

Considering The Text – BLESS

Study Questions:

Using the following study materials (and any others you may think of), pick one or more of the suggested examples. Study and reflect on the story. The ideas and questions are a springboard to your own investigation and reflection, and do not all need to be answered specifically. Be ready to share your insights with your Pilgrim Group.

A Study Bible, various commentaries, concordance, Wikipedia,

Net Bible, Topical Bible, Bible Dictionary, Internet Bible Study Resources (see appendix 4)

Suggested examples, stories to begin learning about 'blessing':

- **Genesis 49: Jacob blesses his twelve sons, who will be patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel.**

Study the blessing he gives each son, consider why he gives each son the blessing he does, give thought to the location (geography in Israel) each son settles in and how the blessing is realized in that place, in sum, how the blessing painted a portrait of the future. Use the space below to write your insights ...

- **Genesis 27-28: Jacob steals Esau's blessing**

Study this narrative closely; why is Isaac's blessing so powerful and binding that it can't be transferred or revoked? Are all Biblical blessings this strong? Why or why not? What purpose does God have in mind with the blessing and how/ why does it have so much merit and strength? Use the space below to write your insights ...

- **Deuteronomy 8: God's command to remember Him and warnings not to forget Him**

Remembrance is a theme in Deuteronomy so it is fitting that chapter 8 focuses upon the command to remember the Lord and the blessing that follow and warnings about forgetting Him and the curses that follow. Study the correlation between both obedience and disobedience with their direct results. Also consider how the concept of 'blessing' fits into this exhortation. Use the space below to write your insights ...

- **Ruth 1-4: Boaz and Ruth begin a courtship**

Read this love story and notice how Boaz is blessed with abundance in order that he may in turn bless others, not only his household and servants, but a stranger from a far country. How do gleaning laws foster blessing? Figuratively, to whom does Boaz's person, position, and authority seem to point? Consider how these principles emerge when Paul says "work with your hands so that you may have something to give to the poor" (Ephesians 4:28). Use the space below to write your insights ...

- **Genesis 12: Abraham, father of all believers, is poured upon so that he can pour out**

Explore the story of Abraham, who he is, where he started. Trace his wanderings, God's pursuit of Him and God's action on his behalf. Why did God choose him? Why is Abraham's name change significant? What does God promise him? Why is this hard for Abraham? Follow his story past Genesis 22. What does the New Testament say about Abraham and Sarah? How is your life impacted by them? Use the space below to write your insights ...

- **Ephesians 1: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**

Look at the chapter one and explore the ways that 'blessing' is used. How does it help us understand the word 'blessing'? What does it teach us about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit? What does its usage teach us about ourselves in relationship with God? You may want to explore other parts of the New Testament to further explore how the word and concept of 'blessing' is used in different contexts for a fuller understanding. Use the space below to write your insights.

Prayer Journal

Write a response to God about what you believe He is asking you to **RECEIVE and BELIEVE** from this passage.

Write a response telling God about what **EMOTIONS** are stirred up in you as a result of studying this passage.

Tell God how you **LIVE** differently having been confronted with the truth of this passage?

What do you believe is the **MAIN THEME** of this passage? Briefly describe the story Jesus is telling here.

Interact with God about which **VERSE** was especially meaningful to you and why.
Write it on a memory card & keep it for reference.

Pilgrim Group Action:

Take turns sharing the results of your study of 'blessing' with your group.

Have some conversation about how it might look to bless each other, the culture and community around us. Talk about how people of the Bible (Abraham, Boaz, Isaac, Jesus, Peter and the disciples, and the early church) practiced the art of blessing and the impact it had on those who were blessed.

On many levels, blessing others is an activity of the priesthood of which we who believe are members (see 1 Peter 2:9). The activity of blessing has a unique quality and power which melts the sacred and secular aspects of life together: there is no demarcation between them. All of life is sacred and spiritual when we are actively cognizant of God's rule and reign in all things.

Spend some time blessing each other in your Pilgrim Group. Consider how we as priests, in the context of a Neo-Monastic House Church, engage each other and the world with an eclectic array of monkish-priestly blessings.

WAY 4: BLESS *(as a Monastic Community)*

Practicing the Biblical concept of 'blessing' as Monastic Communities

Goal: To intentionally express blessing to others through words, gifts, and actions while being cognizant of how we are both recipients and disseminators of blessing.

What To Do: Set aside an evening once a month to gather as a cluster of Pilgrim Groups with children to eat together, pray, converse, and practice the concept and content of your last Pilgrim Group study.

During this evening, do the following activities in a way natural to those gathered in your Monastic Community:

Invite your not-yet-Christian friends!

Eat together.

Enjoy directed conversation about how God blesses us and how His action in our lives transforms the mundane into the sacred.

Also, explore how words have power to bless, especially when they are motivated by love and intentionally directed to calm the fear of the recipient. Talk about how Proverbs, Ephesians, and James speak of how the tongue and its words have power, either for life or for death.

How can we bless with our actions? How did Jesus bless with his actions?

How does the culture and larger surrounding community bless? How can we join it in offering blessing and make it even better at this art?

How can we bless each other in our Monastic Communities?

How can we use blessing for mission?

Consider 1 Peter 2:9. How is blessing related to our priesthood?

If you blessed people, how would you talk about it?

UNIT II – Six Ways of a Missional Life

WAY 5: EATING (*Overview*)

Pilgrim Groups

Enjoying God's means of survival

Goal: To relish the joy of eating together while considering how Jesus used mealtimes as opportunities to gather, bless, teach, nurture, and enjoy relationships and to spiritually nurture people with the Gospel.

Monastic Communities

Practicing God's means of survival

Goal: To practice and experience the joy of eating together while considering how Jesus used mealtimes as opportunities for mission and to do as Jesus did.

Objectives:

One: Explore Scripture and uncover the power in eating together as one of Jesus' missional rhythms.

Two: Practice this missional rhythm of eating together as a Monastic Community.

A Note from Pastor Eric:

In John 6:51, Jesus says, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." This particular statement was quite disturbing to the Jewish people, and many stopped following him because of it. However, their trouble with his words was based on a misunderstanding of his meaning. Jesus was, in fact, explaining that the very key to life rested in consumption of all that he was. This statement was made in the context of Jesus' feeding of the 5,000. I find it interesting that Jesus did much of his teaching while feeding people or eating with them. The main way we survive is by eating. We cannot stay alive for very long without food. So when we sit down and eat together, it provides us an opportunity to be reminded that though food keeps us alive for a short time, a relationship with Jesus and His cross sustains us forever. It is essential for us, as we sit down to a meal, to create conversation about God and what He has provided for us and how He is providing for us in the midst of our struggles, pains, and joys.

WAY 5: EATING (*Prepare for Pilgrim Group*)

Enjoying God's means of survival as Pilgrim Groups

Goal: To relish the joy of eating together while considering how Jesus used mealtimes as opportunities to gather, bless, teach, nurture, and enjoy relationships and to spiritually nurture people with the Gospel.

What To Do Now: Set aside at least one (1) full hour to complete this lesson in preparation for your Pilgrim Group meeting.

Pray, asking the Holy Spirit to lead you into truth.

Next, read the passage slowly and silently several times.

Further, remain open to what He is revealing to you.

Finally, based on the passage, answer each question in the 'Considering the Text' and 'Prayer Journal' sections.

What To Do @ PG: Default: Allow flexibility so The Holy Spirit can guide.

Pray Around, asking each person to share how they're doing.

Next, read and review the Scripture passage, and share results from your study with PG.

Finally, practice praying to the Trinity, especially for personal, community mission.

Scripture Study

Bottom line: we all need to eat to survive. We generally eat 21 meals a week; why not develop a habit of eating a few of those meals with neighbors and friends in order to enjoy and deepen relationships? Like the last, this lesson is a self-guided learning experience to lead you in considering the following:

- The biblical meaning of the word, "eating" and what exactly it points to: action or event, celebration or opportunity. Whether 'eating' is or can be more than just the literal process.
- Some Bible stories that teach us about eating. Spiritual implications of eating.
- How eating plays out in my own life. My issues with eating. The opportunities that eating presents in my life: i.e. survival, pleasure, comfort, mission, etc.
- What it would look like for you to intentionally eat with those around you for the purpose of building relationships and engaging in mission.

Considering The Text – EATING

Study Questions:

Using the following study materials (and any others you may think of), pick one or more of the suggested examples. Study and reflect on the story. The ideas and questions are a springboard to your own investigation and reflection, and do not all need to be answered specifically. Be ready to share your insights with your Pilgrim Group.

A Study Bible, various commentaries, concordance, Wikipedia,

Net Bible, Topical Bible, Bible Dictionary, Internet Bible Study Resources (see appendix 4)

Suggested examples, stories to begin learning about 'eating':

- **Acts 2:42: Early church learns basics of doing life together as Jesus' disciples**

Study this passage with an eye toward the specific context of the early church re: risk-taking, fear, exuberance, joy, want, dependence, freshness of faith, Roman oppression, Jewish hostility, etc. How would eating together be especially rich under these conditions? Since 'sharing possessions as others had need' likely refers also to food, how might this interdependence on one another foster a deep sense of community dependence? Write about how this might look in your life if it were happening now.

- **Luke 9: A mass feeding that turns into a mass**

Study the mass feeding accounts in the New Testament, beginning with the feeding of the five-thousand. What do these amazing accounts teach us about Jesus? What do they teach us about food? Does God have in view a deeper meaning than simply filling empty bellies? When does the miracle of the multiplication happen? What do these events teach us about the spiritual side of life? Where is the Holy Spirit in these accounts?

- **Luke 19: Up a tree and on the Way**

Consider where Jesus is at in His public ministry and where He is soon heading. Look at Zacchaeus and consider the vacuum of power and meaning he experienced before meeting Jesus. Rather than experiencing the filling that money and authority offer, he is transformed by Jesus' filling. Look at how Jesus uses mealtime to create opportunity for the Gospel and how the home is a platform for story-telling and soul rebirth.

- **Luke 22: A special meal with supernatural appeal**

Last meals and last words make for life-defining events. And so when Jesus, at the celebration of Passover, transforms an ordinary meal into a lasting, sacred memorial of His life, death, and resurrection, we ought take notice. The Last Supper is significant on many levels, most of all as a tangible reminder that His body and blood is a love-offering that restores our relationship with God. Every meal can be enjoyed and relished with this truth in view. What other insights do you uncover as you study this passage?

- **Matthew 9:9-13: Eating in with a cesspool of undesirables**

The Gospel doesn't abrogate or overthrow societal structures; rather, the good news of Jesus transforms them. The basic public policy of Jesus' kingdom is offensive and even abhorrent to religious leaders of the time. Where before, separation was the goal, now old and young, rich and poor, respectable and despised, modern and post-modern, elites and commoners come together. Through the Holy Spirit their hearts are arrested and subdued in service to The King. They are coalesced into a beautiful portrait of the people of God, who have all things in common. What does this passage tell you about Jesus? What is he trying to accomplish here? What is he not trying to accomplish here?

Prayer Journal

Write a response to God about what you believe He is asking you to **RECEIVE and BELIEVE** from this passage.

Write a response telling God about what **EMOTIONS** are stirred up in you as a result of studying this passage.

Tell God how you **LIVE** differently having been confronted with the truth of this passage?

What do you believe is the **MAIN THEME** of this passage? Briefly describe the story Jesus is telling here.

Interact with God about which **VERSE** was especially meaningful to you and why.

Write it on a memory card & keep it for reference.

Pilgrim Group Action:

Take turns sharing the results of your study on 'eating' with your group.

Since a positive correlation exists between eating and surviving, we can surmise that eating is an expression of God's grace; that we have food to eat is synonymous with the tender mercies of God. In Jesus' day, it is not an exaggeration to say that most people spent a great deal of their time and energy trying to feed themselves and their families. 'Give us today our daily bread' is a request to survive on earth; it shouted dependence on the sheer mercies of a Holy God.

Talk in your Pilgrim Group about how things have today changed. If agricultural fruitfulness no longer provides necessary dependence upon God for survival, what does? Debit cards? Jobs? Health? What is it today – more than other things – that now reveals dependence upon God?

How might eating together provide a platform for others to experience the kingdom of God? Explain.

WAY 5: EATING *(as a Monastic Community)*

Practicing God's means of survival as Monastic Communities

Goal: To practice and experience the joy of eating together while considering how Jesus used mealtimes as opportunities for mission and to do as Jesus did.

What To Do: Set aside an evening once a month to gather as a cluster of Pilgrim Groups with children to eat together, pray, converse, and practice the concept and content of your last Pilgrim Group study.

During this evening, do the following activities in a way natural to those gathered in your Monastic Community:

Invite your not-yet-Christian friends!

Eat together.

Enjoy directed conversation about the following:

As a Monastic Community, plan ways that you can team up with each other in natural ways in order to invite outsiders over for dinner. Extend hospitality to others for no reason other than simply to bless them.

Try your hardest to push outside your comfort zone. Get out a note pad and decide who you would invite and make a list. Then, make another list even more risky as a back-up if the first list people can't come.

Talk as a group and see how you could do this: as smaller groups or as a big one?

Consider how you might talk about eating together as an opportunity to declare the gospel.

UNIT II – Six Ways of a Missional Life

WAY 6: SABBATH (*Overview*)

Pilgrim Groups

Living the disciplined art of Sabbath

Goal: Embracing the cosmic rhythm of ‘work-rest’ emphasizing the finished work of Jesus’ Cross, its power and relevance to us, its basis as ‘our’ rest, and how we image God in playing, restoring and creating beauty, living, loving to His glory.

Monastic Communities

Practicing the disciplined art of Sabbath

Goal: Giving expression to cosmic rhythm of ‘work-rest’ while relishing the finished work of Jesus’ Cross, examining its power and relevance to us, treasuring its basis as ‘our’ rest, and expressing God’s image in us as we play, restore, create beauty, live and love.

Objectives:

- One:** Discover the rich, deep beauty of God’s design for the work-rest rhythm, uncover its multi-tiered spiritual elements, and consider a Biblical portrait of Sabbath.
- Two:** Practice the disciplined art of Sabbath rest as individuals, couples, families, and as a faith community.

A Note from Pastor Jimmy:

The Bible teaches that a ‘fallow year’ was required every seven years: **“For six years you are to sow your fields and harvest the crops, but during the seventh year let the land lie unplowed and unused (Exodus 23:10).**

Naturally, to allow the field to lay ‘fallow’ every seventh year is wise agriculture and would increase its fertility, since doing so would allow the soil to be replenished. However, while this may have been the *result* of the ‘fallow’ season, it was not the primary *reason* for Israel’s observance. Here in Exodus 23 we find the simplest meaning of ‘leaving ground fallow:’ namely, that the poor may eat and, after them, the wild beasts; this is the only stated purpose. But on the religious plane, observing a ‘fallow season’ was, at its core, a practical expression of the Israelites’ faith in the God who would provide for their needs; it was a larger ripple in the flowing rhythm of Israel’s weekly Sabbath observance, one that promised rest and fulfillment. God’s stated blessing “That you may be refreshed” is the primary intention of the whole of Sabbath or ‘Fallow’ observance.

Therefore, Sabbath is the discipline and art of inviting rhythmic seasons of stillness into our souls so that we may be continuously refreshed and our dependence upon God nurtured. Sabbath is intended to provide ‘space’ in your life so that you can be still and listen for God’s voice and simply rest in His presence.

Jesus Himself calls this ‘the better thing’ (See Luke 10:38-42). It is also intended to nurture in us an ardent trust in God’s provision for today and guidance for tomorrow. We trust His Spirit will prompt within you a joyful response to this gift of ‘fallowness.’

WAY 6: SABBATH (*Prepare for Pilgrim Group*)

Living the disciplined art of Sabbath as Pilgrim Groups

Goal: Embracing the cosmic rhythm of 'work-rest' emphasizing the finished work of Jesus' Cross, its power and relevance to us, its basis as 'our' rest, and how we image God in playing, restoring and creating beauty, living, loving to His glory.

What To Do Now: Set aside at least one (1) full hour to complete this lesson in preparation for your Pilgrim Group meeting.

Pray, asking the Holy Spirit to lead you into truth.

Next, read the passage slowly and silently several times.

Further, remain open to what He is revealing to you.

Finally, based on the passage, answer each question in the 'Considering the Text' and 'Prayer Journal' sections.

What To Do @ PG: Default: Allow flexibility so the Holy Spirit can guide.

Pray Around, asking each person to share how they're doing.

Next, read and review the Scripture passage, and share results from your study with Pilgrim Group.

Finally, practice praying to the Trinity, especially for personal, community mission.

Scripture Study

Like the last, this lesson is a self-guided learning experience to lead you to consider such things as:

- The definition of Sabbath and where it is found in the Bible.
- The importance of Sabbath and why.
- How we can Sabbath in our busy culture. Whether Sabbath is a specific day or a less specific rhythm of life. Activities which relate to Sabbath. Its status as law, practice, discipline, or privilege.
- Sabbath as a missional construct.

Consider the Text – **SABBATH** – Living the disciplined art of Sabbath

Study Questions:

Using the following study materials (and any others you may think of), pick one or more of the suggested examples. Study and reflect on the story. The ideas and questions are a springboard to your own investigation and reflection, and do not all need to be answered specifically. Be ready to share your insights with your Pilgrim Group.

A Study Bible, various commentaries, concordance, Wikipedia,

Net Bible, Topical Bible, Bible Dictionary, Internet Bible Study Resources (see appendix 4)

Suggested examples, passages, stories, narratives to begin learning about ‘Sabbath’:

- **Genesis 1-2: God creates and rests**

Study this passage with an eye for the redemptive focus. God works by creating all things, then He rests by suspending all work for a day. Look also at Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. What does God’s command to ‘remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy’ mean? Why is it important? What would happen if they did not observe the Sabbath day? Does Sabbath have to happen on a Sunday or is any day just as good? That begs the questions: what should characterize Sabbath observance?

- **Luke 10:38-42: rest amid work**

Who do you resonate with more: Mary or Martha? For sure, at various times we've been each one. Sabbath is a community command; it is not a mandate for the spiritual lone-ranger but rather a call for corporate engagement. That is not to say that we must do away with individual ways of connecting with God, but rather that we should begin afresh to explore how we might experience Sabbath together. What does this passage teach about Sabbath?

- **Matthew 11:25-30: the irony of an easy yoke**

Study this passage and be ready to explain to your group what Jesus intends you to learn and practice from it. What does Jesus mean by 'these things' in verse 25? Why are they hidden from all except babes? Explore the commands: How do you 'come to Jesus'? How do we take His yoke on? What is His yoke? How do we learn from Him? What is rest for the soul?

- **Exodus 16:15, 23-26: a people dependent on God for Sabbath provision**

Consider this passage about how God provided for Israel to rest from food preparations on the Sabbath. Note that this was a time when the Israelites were camped out in close quarters. How does it look to experience Sabbath rest in community rather than in isolation? How do different people rest differently? How could we intermingle our various expressions of rest and practice them together? How does God provide for us to pause from our routine activities?

- **Extra Credit: Community Sabbathing**

What would 'Sabbath in community' look like on a camping trip? Could families going on vacation together be an expression of Sabbath? How about clusters of people going to the monastery or Abby together? How is our weekly, gathered worship as a community a demonstration of Sabbath?

Is Sabbath a ceasing from things or an activity toward others or both? Explain. What does this look like for you?

At the core, Sabbath is an intentional resting from all kinds of work – a fast, even – so that we can experience God's presence and refreshment in our lives. How might Sabbath observance be made more rich by an ardent repentance of those strongholds that have the tightest grip on us: what would rest be like for us if we ceased – at least temporarily – from technology, fear, food, pornography, etc.?

How can we differentiate 'sabbath' from 'celebration'? How are they complimentary? The former requires advance preparation so as to reduce labor in its observance while the latter is labor-laden in its expression. How do we connect them?

Prayer Journal

Write a response to God about what you believe He is asking you to **RECEIVE and BELIEVE** from this passage.

Write a response telling God about what **EMOTIONS** are stirred up in you as a result of studying this passage.

Tell God how you **LIVE** differently having been confronted with the truth of this passage?

What do you believe is the **MAIN THEME** of this passage? Briefly describe the story Jesus is telling here.

Interact with God about which **VERSE** was especially meaningful to you and why.
Write it on a memory card & keep it for reference.

Pilgrim Group Action:

Pray around while noting each Person of God and being sensitive to how everyone is doing.

Pray specifically about the things you learned in this study, about truths revealed in your study of Biblical stories about Sabbath and resting.

Take turns sharing the results of your study of 'Sabbath' with your group.

Take some time to discuss the extra credit questions above with a view of actually putting your ideas and insights into practice next chance you get.

WAY 6: SABBATH *(as a Monastic Community)*

Living the disciplined art of Sabbath as Monastic Communities

Goal: Giving expression to cosmic rhythm of 'work-rest' while relishing the finished work of Jesus' Cross, examining its power and relevance to us, treasuring its basis as 'our' rest, and expressing God's image in us as we play, restore, create beauty, live and love.

What To Do:

Set aside an evening once a month to gather as a cluster of Pilgrim Groups with children to eat together, pray, converse, and practice the concept and content of your last Pilgrim Group study.

During this evening, do the following activities in a way natural to those gathered in your Monastic Community:

Invite your not-yet-Christian friends!

Eat together.

Enjoy directed conversation about how God what you learned from your PG experience.

How might you detach from your addiction to technology and electronics in order to purify your Sabbath observance?

What would it look like to do Sabbath together as a monastic community? As families?

How can we create spaces of peace for the world to experience rest?

Since money can't be earned on the Sabbath, how does this foster dependence upon God?

How might your life be enriched by becoming as a little child and taking time to enjoy the grandeur of creation as a way of appreciating God's majesty, creative power, and care for you?

Appendix 1:

Your Identity in the Kingdom of God

MY RELATIONSHIP

I am reconciled to God - 2 Cor 5:18
I'm a child of God - He is my Father - 1 Jn 3:1,2
I am a saint - Eph 1:1; 1 Cor 1:2; Phil 1:1
I am Christ's friend - Jn 15:15
I am a fellow citizen in God's kingdom - Eph 2:19
I am born of God - 1 Jn 4:7
I have been brought near to Christ - Eph 2:13
I have been adopted by God - Rom 8:15
I'm to be righteous and holy like God - Eph 4:24
I have direct access to God - Eph 2:18

MY INHERITANCE

I am a citizen of heaven - Phil 3:20
I am an heir of God - Rom 8:17
I've been rescued from Satan's domain - Col 1:13
I am a joint heir with Christ - Rom 8:17; Gal 4:7
I am hidden with Christ in God - Col 3:3
I am blessed with every spiritual blessing - Eph 1:3
I am chosen of God - holy, beloved - Col 3:12
I am a child of promise - Rom 9:8; Gal 3:14
I am a child of light, not darkness - 1 Thess 5:5
I've been given great promises - 2 Pet 1:4
I am a partaker of Christ - Heb 3:14
I'm one of God's living stones - 1 Pet 2:5

MY TRANSFORMATION

I'm a member of a royal priesthood - 1 Pet 2:9
I'm redeemed and forgiven - Eph 1:6-8
I'm to be a stranger to this world - 1 Pet 2:11
I've been justified - made righteous - Rom 5:1
I'm an enemy of the devil - 1 Pet 5:8
I have eternal life - Jn 5:24
I died w/Christ to the power of sin - Rom 6:1-6

MY CALLING

I am free from condemnation - Rom 8:1
I am to be salt on the earth - Mt 5:13
I have received the Spirit of God - 1 Cor 2:12
I am to be light in the world - Mt 5:14
I have been given the mind of Christ - 1 Cor 2:16
I'm chosen and appointed to bear fruit - Jn 15:16
I have been crucified with Christ - Gal 2:20
I am called to do the works of Christ - Jn 14:12
I am a new creation - 2 Cor 5:17

MY CALLING CONTINUED

I am to do what Christ commanded His disciples - Mt 28:20
I have been made alive with Christ - Eph 2:5
I have been given spiritual authority - Lk 10:19
I am God's workmanship - Eph 2:10
Signs should accompany my work - Mk 16:17-20
I have received fullness in Christ - Col 2:10
I am a minister of a new covenant - 2 Cor 3:6
I am a minister of reconciliation - 2 Cor 5:18,19

MY POSITION

I am to be an expression of life in Christ - Col 3:4
I am connected to the true vine - Jn 15:1,5
I am a partaker of a heavenly calling - Heb 3:1
I'm a willing slave of righteousness - Rom 6:18,22
I am a temple of God - 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19
I am one spirit with the Lord - 1 Cor 6:17
I am a member of Christ's body - 1 Cor 12:27

Appendix 2: **Intro to Pilgrim Groups**

The Village Pilgrimage...

The spiritual disciplines create a path from our physical, material world into the new world of the kingdom of God, a world which is breaking in around us. On this path, we learn to think about and respond rightly to God. We open space in our lives to become aware of God interacting with us. We begin to see his beauty unfolding in and around us, and His work accomplished through us. This is the pilgrimage we are presently undertaking.

This Village journey has several objectives: first, to further develop community within the Village. Pilgrim Groups are a specific discipleship structure of the Village, and we ask that people who participate in them be active participants in the community, attending worship services at the Village and so forth during their time in the Pilgrim Group. Within this context, the Pilgrim Group is designed for the practice of some of the disciplines of the faith together (these may vary depending on the topic & structure of the particular study & group); to discuss our sexuality in healthy ways; to confess sin, pray for each other, and experience healing; to develop leaders (if you are part of a Pilgrim Group, you should expect to lead one in the future); to grow in knowledge and application of the Bible; and finally, to further the discussion of our vocation in the Kingdom of God.

The 6 Ways Study...

This particular Pilgrim Group study is focused on becoming acquainted ways of a Monastic Community. We will consider it in the context of Scripture and as it applies to our lives and the lives of those around us. As we do this, we will study and discuss passages of the New Testament. We will also utilize the Hot Seat model which helps us to invite each other into a fuller experience of the gospel in our particular circumstances. We will explore new ways of praying together and tell our stories to each other.

The Discussion...

In response to another person's sharing, group members should refrain from giving advice or telling their own stories as a way of instruction. This is a time to pursue one another by asking open-ended questions and practicing active listening. Try to use clarifying statements like, "What do you mean by ____?" or, "Tell me more about ____." Instead of offering answers to people's problems, consider praying together with the laying on of hands as a default solution.

The Confession...

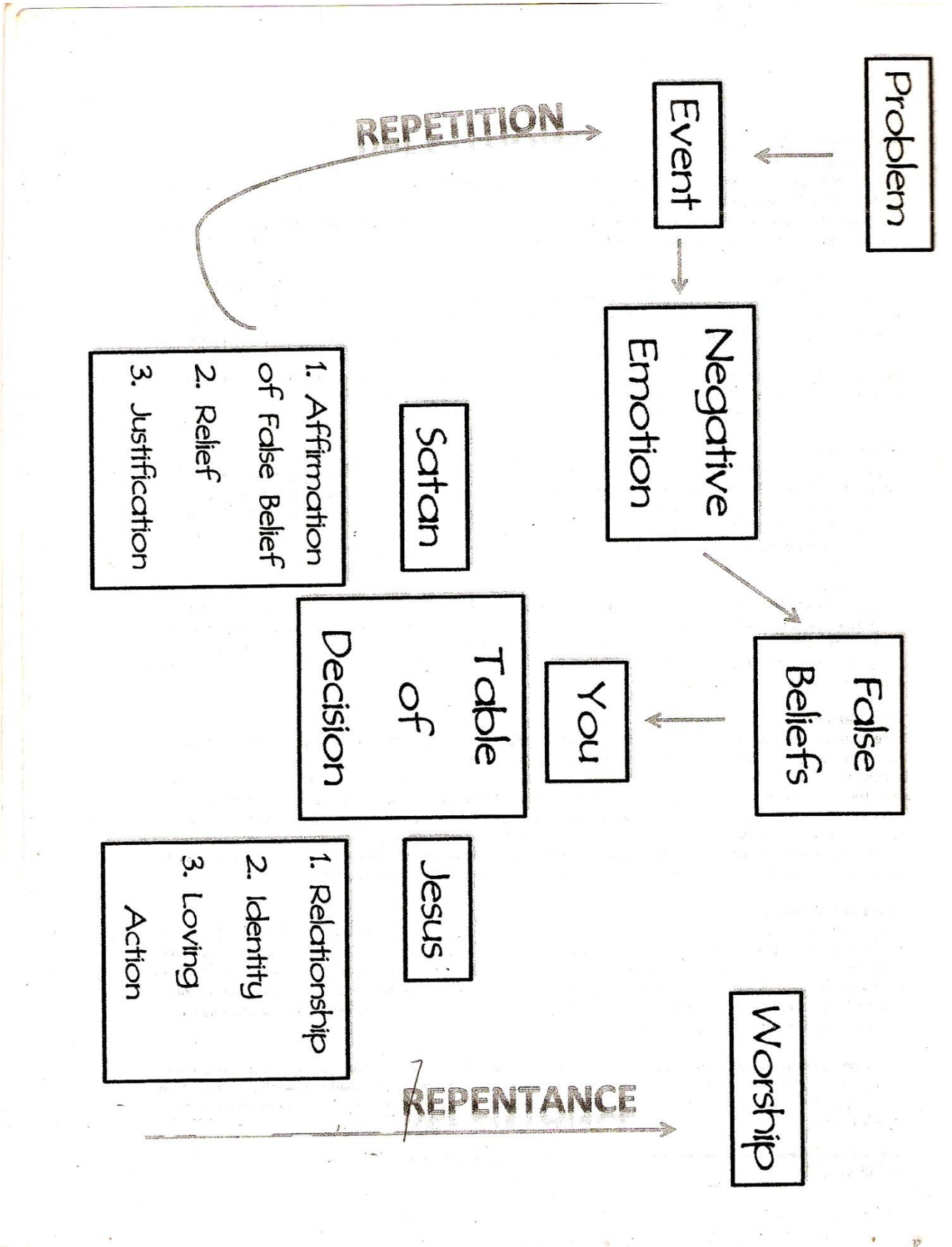
Confession is about our struggle to live "in the world but not of the world." This may include admitting to overt sins, but it may just as well be telling other people about our worldly patterns of thought that need to be transformed (Romans 12:1-2). Any way of thought or action that is not based on God's goodness and the life to which He calls us is fair game for confession. This should be followed by people praying for the confessee, as in James 5:16 and 1 John 1:9. God wants to renew our minds, and He does this when we ask in prayer. Sometimes areas of sin in our life seem subtle, or we hold them in denial, so conversation in your pilgrim group may also include helping guide someone toward seeing their own hidden sin and the impact it has. We need to be open to the voices of people in our community as they gently point out areas that need to be healed.

Discussing Sexuality...

As we consider our stories and tell each other about the experiences which have shaped us, our sexuality may be an evident force. God has designed us as sexual beings. Sexuality, however, which He created for good, has been twisted and abused in the dark world around us. We are each in the process of growing into wholeness in this area of our lives. Some of us struggle with addictions to pornography, some have long histories of sexual abuse, some have lived sexually impure lives, and most of us struggle to reconcile the worldly messages about sexuality with our own bodies, desires, and experiences.

As we seek to better understand God's view of sexuality and to become more comfortable with our sexual selves in Christ, it is important for us to create a safe space for each other where we can head toward the freedom from shame which God offers. Please honor sensitive conversations with appropriate confidentiality as well as gentle, active listening.

Appendix 3: Hot Seat Model



Appendix 4: Internet Tools for Bible Study

Many options are available for Bible study on the internet, offering rich resources at no cost which once would have required a large library of books. This page describes some of the possibilities for your study.

- *NET Bible* (www.bible.org/netbible) is the website designed by the publishers of the New English Translation. This translation is quoted throughout our study. The Bible reader on this website integrates extensive footnotes throughout, explaining word choices that were made in the translation process as well as alternate meanings, background information, and such that apply to any given passage.

- *Blue Letter Bible* (www.blueletterbible.org) integrates extensive Bible study tools. The search windows to the right of the screen are especially helpful in finding information on a specific passage or word. Here are some handy tips for using this resource:

- When you type a word into the search bar, make sure you select a relevant Bible translation.
- This will produce a **Concordance** which lists each occurrence of the word in that translation of the Bible. Scroll to the bottom of the page for *Continued Search Results* to get past the first section.
- Change from the tab “**Primary Results**” to the tab “**LexiConc**” to find a **transliteration** of the original Greek or Hebrew word, its basic **Dictionary** meaning, and the number assigned to it in the **Strong’s** numbering system.

-In the “**Primary Results**” screen, click on a Bible reference to show the whole verse and passage in which a word occurs. The following key will guide you through the blue lettered boxes next to each verse:

- **K** : a list of related passages, aka “**cross-references**”.
- **C** : a **concordance** which details each original Greek or Hebrew word in the verse.
- **L** : brings up a list of applicable **commentaries** (click the down arrow, select a Commentary, and press Go).
- **I** : brings up available maps and images that might relate to the content of the verse.
- **V** : the verse in multiple English translations (a **Parallel Bible**), shedding light on the various possible meanings of the passage.
- **D** : additional dictionary information.

- *Bible Gateway* (www.biblegateway.com) has a very straightforward interface for looking up passages of Scripture in various translations, as well as a key word search option which acts as a **concordance** for one or multiple translations of the Bible.

- *Study Light* (studylight.org) provides a search bar which produces the passage in the translation of your choice. Cross-references are available for key words, and a Study Resource List appears to the right of the screen.