

THE VILLAGE

PILGRIM GROUP STUDY

6

COLOSSIANS

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PILGRIM GROUP

The Village Pilgrimage

The spiritual disciplines create a path from our physical 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 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.

CHAPTER 1

Colossians 1:1-14

¹From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ² to the saints, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ, at Colossae. Grace and peace to you from God our Father!

³ We always give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴ since we heard about your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the saints. ⁵ Your faith and love have arisen from the hope laid up for you in heaven, which you have heard about in the message of truth, the gospel ⁶ that has come to you. Just as in the entire world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, so it has also been bearing fruit and growing among you from the first day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth. ⁷ You learned the gospel from Epaphras, our dear fellow slave – a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf – ⁸ who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

⁹ For this reason we also, from the day we heard about you, have not ceased praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so that you may live worthily of the Lord and please him in all respects – bearing fruit in every good deed, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for the display of all patience and steadfastness, joyfully ¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the saints' inheritance in the light. ¹³ He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

1. What is an apostle?

2. Paul is an apostle of Christ Jesus 'through the will of God'. What has God made you to be through his will?

3. Paul refers to saints of Colossae. What does it mean to be a saint?

4. List five things you are thankful for...



5. Paul was thankful for the Colossians. That gratitude arose when he prayed for them. What are the two things that ignite Paul's gratitude?

6. Faith and love spring from hope that is stored up for you in heaven. When you reflect on hope not coming from within you, but being outside of you and held in heaven, what thoughts come to mind?

7. Gospel means 'good news'. The Village sees the gospel as a story, an identity, and a Kingdom. What is the true message of the gospel Paul is talking about?

8. What 'fruit' does the gospel bear?

9. What motivates Paul's prayers for the Colossians?

10. What does it mean to pray continually?

11. With the Colossians in mind, what does Paul continually ask God for?

12. Underlying Paul's letter is joyful gratitude for God's goodness to the Colossians. In what ways do you experience God's goodness resulting in gratitude? What does joyful gratitude look like in your life?

CHAPTER 1 - Selah

1. Where do you see God the Father in the passage?

2. Where do you see God the Son in the passage?

3. Where do you see God the Spirit in the passage?

4. Talk about the gospel's impact on you.

5. What keeps you from experiencing God's grace?

6. What does living a life worthy of God look like?

CHAPTER 2

Colossians 1:15-23

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation,¹⁶ for all things in heaven and on earth were created by him – all things, whether visible or invisible, whether thrones or dominions, whether principalities or powers – all things were created through him and for him.

¹⁷ He himself is before all things and all things are held together in him. ¹⁸ He is the head of the body, the church, as well as the beginning, the firstborn from among the dead, so that he himself may become first in all things. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in the Son ²⁰ and through him to reconcile all things to himself by making peace through the blood of his cross – through him, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

²¹ And you were at one time strangers and enemies in your minds as expressed through your evil deeds, ²² but now he has reconciled you by his physical body through death to present you holy, without blemish, and blameless before him – ²³ if indeed you remain in the faith, established and firm, without shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard. This gospel has also been preached in all creation under heaven, and I, Paul, have become its servant.

1. Jesus is the perfect image of the invisible God. What does that say about our bearing God's image?

2. Creation is in him, through him and for him. Reflect on what that means.

3. What does it mean for Jesus to be before all things?

4. Reflect on what it means for all things to be held together in Christ.

5. What does it mean for you to recognize that Jesus is the head of the church?

6. Jesus is supreme in everything. What effect does that have on your belief about God?

7. What does it mean to be alienated?

8. What does it mean to be reconciled?

CHAPTER 2 - Selah

1. Where do you see God the Father in the passage?

2. Where do you see God the Son in the passage?

3. Where do you see God the Spirit in the passage?

4. What does it feel like to be without blemish and blameless?

5. What is required of you to be a 'servant of the gospel'?

CHAPTER 3

Colossians 1:24-2:5

²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I fill up in my physical body – for the sake of his body, the church – what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ. ²⁵ I became a servant of the church according to the stewardship from God – given to me for you – in order to complete the word of God, ²⁶ that is, the mystery that has been kept hidden from ages and generations, but has now been revealed to his saints. ²⁷ God wanted to make known to them the glorious riches of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ We proclaim him by instructing and teaching all people with all wisdom so that we may present every person mature in Christ. ²⁹ Toward this goal I also labor, struggling according to his power that powerfully works in me.

^{2:1} For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for those who have not met me face to face. ² My goal is that their hearts, having been knit together in love, may be encouraged, and that they may have all the riches that assurance brings in their understanding of the knowledge of the mystery of God, namely, Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ I say this so that no one will deceive you through arguments that sound reasonable. ⁵ For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your morale and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

1. What does it look like to rejoice in suffering?

2. Paul's suffering is for the good of the church. How does our suffering help us to present God's word in its fullness?

3. What is the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations?

4. Paul proclaims Christ. How do you proclaim Christ?

5. Paul's proclamation is in two parts: admonishment (instructing) and teaching. How do those approaches differ and why are they both necessary?

6. Paul expends his energy to bring others to maturity in Christ. What does it look like to be mature in Christ?

7. Paul contends even for those he has not yet met so that they might be:

- a. Encouraged in heart. How do you encourage others?

- b. United in love. How do you experience and promote loving unity?

- c. Have the full riches of complete understanding. How do you promote understanding of the gospel?

CHAPTER 3 - Selah

1. Where do you see God the Father in the passage?

2. Where do you see God the Son in the passage?

3. Where do you see God the Spirit in the passage?

4. In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. How do you search out these treasures?

5. What are some ways in which you experience deception?

6. We sometimes prefer that the experience of God be more complex than it really is. Paul says the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found in Christ. If you accept that as truth, what ought you to do to gain wisdom and knowledge and what might that look like for you?

CHAPTER 4

Colossians 2:6-23

⁶ Therefore, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and firm in your faith just as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. ⁸ Be careful not to allow anyone to captivate you through an empty, deceitful philosophy that is according to human traditions and the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in him all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head over every ruler and authority. ¹¹ In him you also were circumcised – not, however, with a circumcision performed by human hands, but by the removal of the fleshly body, that is, through the circumcision done by Christ. ¹² Having been buried with him in baptism, you also have been raised with him through your faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead. ¹³ And even though you were dead in your transgressions and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he nevertheless made you alive with him, having forgiven all your transgressions. ¹⁴ He has destroyed what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness expressed in decrees opposed to us. He has taken it away by nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ Disarming the rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

¹⁶ Therefore do not let anyone judge you with respect to food or drink, or in the matter of a feast, new moon, or Sabbath days – ¹⁷ these are only the shadow of the things to come, but the reality is Christ! ¹⁸ Let no one who delights in humility and the worship of angels pass judgment on you. That person goes on at great lengths about what he has supposedly seen, but he is puffed up with empty notions by his fleshly mind. ¹⁹ He has not held fast to the head from whom the whole body, supported and knit together through its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.

²⁰ If you have died with Christ to the elemental spirits of the world, why do you submit to them as though you lived in the world? ²¹ “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!” ²² These are all destined to perish with use, founded as they are on human commands and teachings. ²³ Even though they have the appearance of wisdom with their self-imposed worship and false humility achieved by an unsparing treatment of the body – a wisdom with no true value – they in reality result in fleshly indulgence.

1. What does it look like to live life 'in Christ'?

2. What does rootedness look like? What are some steps you might take to root yourself in him?

3. What does being built up look like? What steps might you take to be built up in Christ?

4. What does being firm in your faith look like? What steps would you need to take in order to stand strongly for Jesus?

5. Circumcision is a cutting away of flesh. What does it look like to receive the circumcision of Christ?

6. Baptism is going down into death and coming up into life. What does it mean to die to sin?

7. Jesus destroyed our sin and offers us his perfect life. We receive it through faith. Satan and his helpers are made a spectacle of, and the cross destroys their work. What would it look like to live as though your sin was destroyed?

8. What does it feel like to be judged? How do you judge others?

CHAPTER 4 - Selah

1. Where do you see God the Father in the passage?

2. Where do you see God the Son in the passage?

3. Where do you see God the Spirit in the passage?

4. Christ is the head of the body. How is it that you connect to the head, to Christ?

5. The concern of Paul is that the Colossians are returning to human religions, traditions, and false beliefs. What are some false beliefs you face in your spiritual journey?

CHAPTER 5

Colossians 3:1-17

^{3:1} Therefore, if you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Keep thinking about things above, not things on the earth, ³ for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ (who is your life) appears, then you too will be revealed in glory with him. ⁵ So put to death whatever in your nature belongs to the earth: sexual immorality, impurity, shameful passion, evil desire, and greed which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these things the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience. ⁷ You also lived your lives in this way at one time, when you used to live among them. ⁸ But now, put off all such things as anger, rage, malice, slander, abusive language from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another since you have put off the old man with its practices ¹⁰ and have been clothed with the new man that is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created it. ¹¹ Here there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and in all.

¹² Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if someone happens to have a complaint against anyone else. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also forgive others. ¹⁴ And to all these virtues add love, which is the perfect bond. ¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ be in control in your heart (for you were in fact called as one body to this peace), and be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and exhorting one another with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, all with grace in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1. How do you put sin 'to death'?

2. Paul says we should look up and not give in to passions and evil. He invites us to put off the things that invite God's wrath. What are you being invited to turn away from?

3. He invites us to put off evil and put on righteousness. Where there is righteousness, there is a breaking down of barriers. Reflect on what it means to be connected in a community that is held together in Christ.

4. Define mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. How do these attributes play out in your life?

5. Just as God forgives you, you are to forgive others. How did God forgive you? Where do you struggle when trying to forgive those who hurt you?

6. Paul returns to the theme of gratitude. How does forgiving lead to gratitude?

7. We are to let Christ's word dwell in us richly and teach and exhort others with wisdom. What do you do to take in God's word?

8. Do you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 5 – Selah

1. Where do you see God the Father in the passage?

2. Where do you see God the Son in the passage?

3. Where do you see God the Spirit in the passage?

4. Paul says to put on love over all other virtues. What does it look like to clothe yourself in love?

5. Whatever you say or do should be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus. How does that play out in your living day to day?

6. The call to the community is to be 'one'. What does that mean?

CHAPTER 6

Colossians 3:18-4:1

¹⁸ Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. ²⁰ Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing in the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, so they will not become disheartened. ²² Slaves, obey your earthly masters in every respect, not only when they are watching – like those who are strictly people-pleasers – but with a sincere heart, fearing the Lord. ²³ Whatever you are doing, work at it with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not for people. ²⁴ because you know that you will receive your inheritance from the Lord as the reward. Serve the Lord Christ. ²⁵ For the one who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there are no exceptions.

^{4:1} Masters, treat your slaves with justice and fairness, because you know that you also have a master in heaven.

1. Why are wives asked to submit to their husbands?

2. Why are husbands asked to love their wives?

3. What does submission that is fitting to the Lord look like?

4. What does love that is not embittered look like?

5. Children are called to obedience. How do we teach obedience?

6. Dads, in particular, are urged not to exasperate their children lest they become disheartened. Why would that be a concern?

7. We don't see slavery in the way Paul saw it in our North American culture. The invitation was to serve sincerely. What does that say about your workplace conduct?

8. How would your work habits change if your boss was Jesus?

9. There are expectations for those who own slaves. Does that crossover for those who employ others? If so, how should employers treat employees?

CHAPTER 6 – Selah

1. Where do you see God the Father in the passage?

2. Where do you see God the Son in the passage?

3. Where do you see God the Spirit in the passage?

4. Paul indicates that we work for a reward. What is that reward?

5. What does the passage say about what family relationships look like?

6. What does the passage say about work relationships?

CHAPTER 7

Colossians 4:2-18

² Be devoted to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving. ³ At the same time pray for us too, that God may open a door for the message so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may make it known as I should. ⁵ Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunities. ⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer everyone.

⁷ Tychicus, a dear brother, faithful minister, and fellow slave in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. ⁸ I sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are doing and that he may encourage your hearts. ⁹ I sent him with Onesimus, the faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you about everything here.

¹⁰ Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him). ¹¹ And Jesus who is called Justus also sends greetings. In terms of Jewish converts, these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. ¹² Epaphras, who is one of you and a slave of Christ, greets you. He is always struggling in prayer on your behalf, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. ¹³ For I can testify that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Our dear friend Luke the physician and Demas greet you. ¹⁵ Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters who are in Laodicea and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house. ¹⁶ And after you have read this letter, have it read to the church of Laodicea. In turn, read the letter from Laodicea as well. ¹⁷ And tell Archippus, "See to it that you complete the ministry you received in the Lord."

¹⁸ I, Paul, write this greeting by my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

1. Paul says to be devoted to prayer. Are you? Why or why not?

2. Paul asks for prayer that doors will be opened for him to preach the gospel. How does his prayer request compare and contrast with your prayer requests?

3. Our speech should be gracious and 'seasoned with salt'. What does that mean?

4. Paul sends Tychicus and Onesimus to encourage the Colossians with the stories of what Paul is doing regarding the gospel. How does or would your story encourage others?

5. Make a list of those who have worked with you, on your behalf, or whose work encourages you. Talk to them and let them know the impact they have.

6. Paul does a lot of greeting and offering the greetings of others. How do you get to know people and how do you greet people?

7. Paul admires and recommends those who work hard for the sake of the gospel. Would he recommend you and your work? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 7 – Selah

1. Where do you see God the Father in the passage?

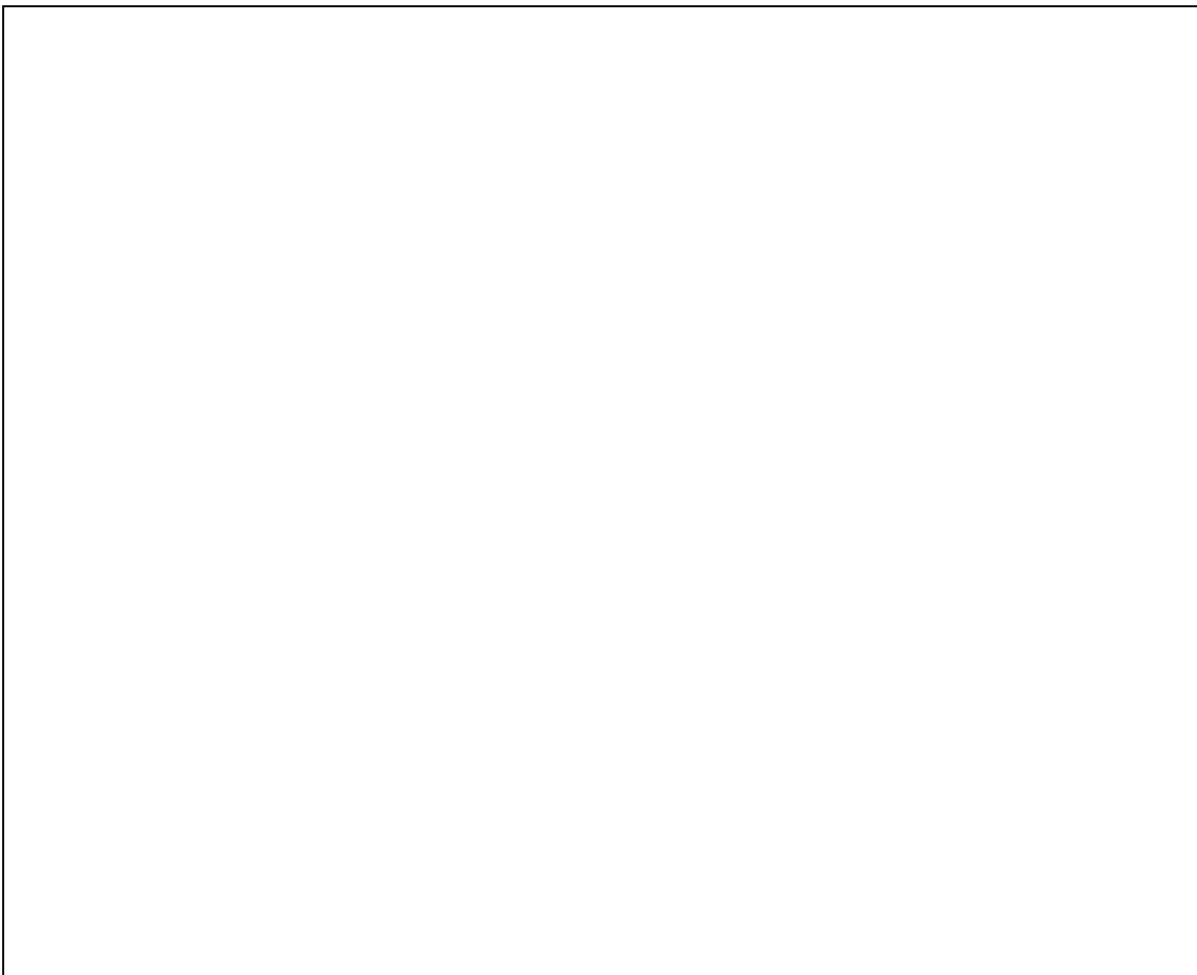
2. Where do you see God the Son in the passage?

3. Where do you see God the Spirit in the passage?

4. What ministry have you received from the Lord?

5. What must you do to complete your ministry?

6. If you were to write a letter to the people of the Village, what would you want to say to them?
(feel free to write such a letter!)

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to write their letter to the people of the Village.

APPENDIX A. Identity in the Kingdom

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 B. Trinitarian Prayer *by Rod Hugen*

Trinitarian prayer comes from a desire to establish a relationship with the three Persons of the Trinity. We recognize God as Father, Son, and Spirit.

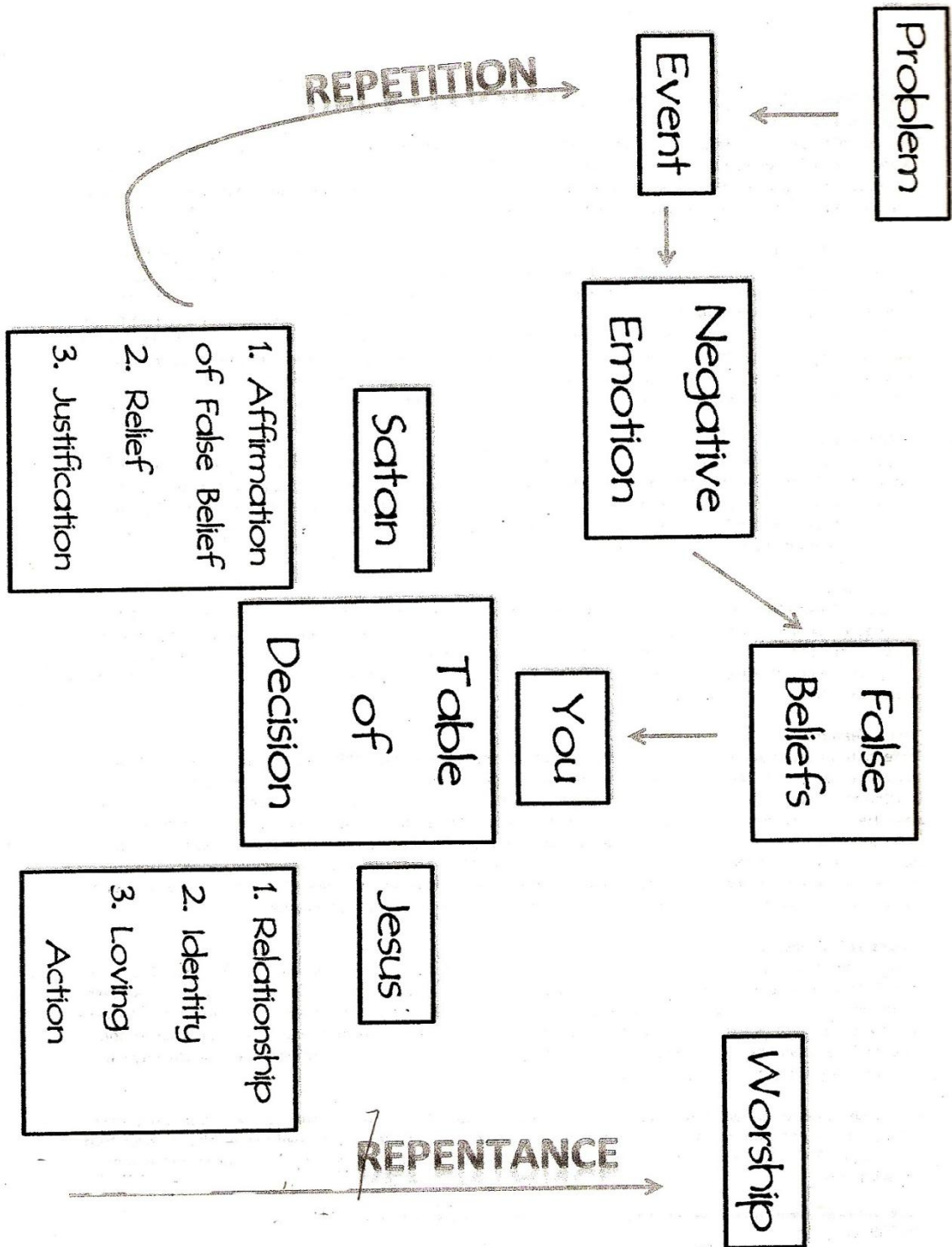
As a kid, one of the beauties of a proper relationship with our father is that we are always amazed at what he can do and we are always excited and willing to ask him for anything, knowing that he is good and loving and will do what is best for us. We recognize that in our sin flawed world we don't have good father role models, but also recognize that God is the perfect father. With that in mind, we begin our Trinitarian Prayer time by telling God how amazing he is and we describe to him our experience of his attributes. We tell him about our knowledge of his strength, or majesty, or beauty, or love, or any of the other qualities that we see in him. We choose to fully trust him. We also ask him for anything we desire. We are willing to risk him answering 'no' or 'later' because we know that the perfect Dad knows best what we should have. He may say no to ice cream before dinner, but he may take pleasure in giving us our heart's desire. We are confident that whatever we ask in his name he will give us and that he loves us completely and will not give us that which would harm us.

The second part of our Trinitarian Prayer comes out of recognition that Jesus is the perfect older brother to us. He has already been through whatever we might be going through. He has suffered death itself on our behalf and sits at the right hand of the Father. He knows what to do in every situation we face since he was tempted as we are tempted and he suffered in ways that we cannot imagine as he suffered the consequences of our sin. He loves us as brothers and sisters and we can ask him to help us with anything. He is always available to us when we are confused or frightened or when we simply don't know what to do. He will show us in his word and through his Spirit everything that we should do or say. He never mistreats us or treats us evilly since he is good and righteous and loving toward all he has made. We can depend on him whenever we are unsure and we know that he will correct us when we do that which is harmful or sinful. We have confidence in him and can trust whatever he tells us to do so we simply tell him what an amazing older brother he is and bring all of our cares and concerns before him.

The third part of our Trinitarian Prayer is recognition that the Spirit is our encourager. The Spirit always speaks truth to us and urges us to do that which is righteous and good. The Spirit can be trusted and when we listen to the Spirit we hear that which the Father and Jesus would have us do. We realize that the primary way the Spirit speaks to us is through the Bible so we open our Bibles and listen for what he might be saying to us. We also recognize that the Spirit prompts us to do what we are called to do through the still, small voice that urges us into the ways God would have us go. With that in mind, we sit silently and expectantly waiting to hear from the Spirit. We ask the Spirit to guide us into all truth and we make note of that which we read in God's word and that which we 'hear'. We listen knowing that the Spirit will never lead us astray and will always encourage us and give us hope.

We finish our time of Trinitarian Prayer sharing with our community what we heard from God. We share the Scriptures that came to our minds and we offer what we believe we heard to the scrutiny of others who walk with Jesus. We recognize that God is also a God who speaks through his people and we willingly submit what we believe is true to other believers and especially to the elders who are called to be responsible for our spiritual care. We recognize that sometimes we do not hear clearly and that we need others to speak truth to us. We listen carefully to those God has placed in our lives recognizing that in humility and submission to others we can most often hear the truth of what God is saying to us.

APPENDIX C. Table of Decision



APPENDIX D. Hot Seat Rules to Live by

Things to Avoid:

- “Why” Questions
- Stories about yourself
- Explanations
- “Yes” or “No” Questions
- Advice

Things to Practice:

- Open-ended Questions
- Reflective Listening (“So it sounds like...,” “I hear you saying that...”)
- Locating emotions (“How did you feel when...”)
- Locating beliefs (“What belief did this stem from...?”)
- Locating choices (“What choice did you make...?”)

Listening to Jesus together:

- How does His story impact this situation?
- What is your true identity in Christ?
- What would your life in the kingdom of God look like if you trusted Him here?
- How have you been finding relief?
- How is Jesus inviting you into relationship?