

MODULE 1
DISCIPLESHIP
PARTICIPANT



AS THE FATHER HAS SENT ME, SO I AM SENDING YOU
AMBASSADORS
fostering a new generation of spiritual leaders



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AMBASSADORS

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AS THE FATHER HAS SENT ME, SO I AM SENDING YOU AMBASSADORS



Welcome to Ambassadors.

Ambassadors is a new level of youth ministry designed to equip you to be the best that you can be and to be part of a new generation of youth that will take on the challenge to be the hands, feet, and voice of Jesus in your local church and community.

An ambassador generally represents a country or a cause. A Christian ambassador is a representative of another kind; they represent the values, principles, culture, and laws of the kingdom of God. They stand for the character and purpose of the King of this kingdom—Jesus Christ, Himself.

The Ambassadors training is based on seven foundations designed for your development. They include:

1. A Christ-centered discipleship plan
2. Leadership development
3. A personal, public, and small group based mission lifestyle
4. Character and personality development, including outdoor, high adventure programming
5. Lifestyle and vocational training
6. Nurturing godly relationships
7. Community outreach development through service projects and emergency preparedness training

Each of these seven foundations will be taught in the form of seven modules, and you will acquire certification for each module completed.

Each module contains four elements that will be consistently present throughout the course:

- First, the concept of a spiritual companion. At the beginning of each module, you will choose a friend who will be your companion for the duration of the module. You will meet with that friend during each meeting for mutual encouragement and support towards your growth as an Ambassador. Groups of spiritual companions will also join for certain activities. This will foster the concept of community, interdependence, and accountability into the Ambassador's experience.
- Second, an Individual Discipleship Plan (IDP). At the beginning of every module, you will make a simple plan of how you would like to grow spiritually and acquire the practical skills, knowledge, and experience proposed in the module. Your spiritual companion will be there throughout the module to help and encourage you to accomplish your plan. The IDP helps to emphasize

the continuing nature of discipleship and that learning is a continual part of life. It stresses the need for interdependence on each other as we learn, grow, and work for God. (See guidelines for creating your IDP on the next page.)

- Third, projects. Each module will have a project that will integrate the core concepts from the module into a service learning activity focused on helping others. This will be an opportunity for your group to work together as a whole.
- Fourth, social activities. A social activity will be planned for the group at least once a month. Make sure that you always participate.

Participant's Guide

A participant's guide for each module has been prepared for you. You hold one in your hands.

- The Participant's Guide is essentially your workbook, which contains all the lessons for each module that you will engage with.
- In the back pages of each module you will find the following: a page to create your IDP, and a list of the sessions of the module that your leader will sign and date upon completion.
- You will be required to complete 75 percent attendance and participation to receive your certification or award at the end of each module. Participants can make up for missed lessons to achieve the required 75 percent at the discretion of their leader.

Fostering togetherness is at the heart of a model for discipleship, which the General Conference is focusing on; it is known as "Together Growing Fruitful Disciples." This model emphasizes understanding, connecting, equipping, and ministering—but doing all of this "together." For God did not design us to grow or minister alone, but in community. Paul writes that growing in Christ is achieved as everyone uses the gifts God has given to them, "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

Thank you for accepting the call and challenge to become an Ambassador of Jesus Christ and His kingdom. May this experience enrich your life and assist you in discovering God's greater purpose for you.

General Conference Youth Ministries Department



Gilbert Cangy
GC Youth Director



Hiskia Missah
Associate GC Youth Director



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CREATING YOUR IDP

As a human being with a nature that naturally tends to move away from God, growing to reflect Jesus as an Ambassador will rarely happen by chance or without much thought. That's why for each of the Ambassador's modules, you will be creating your own IDP. The focus of each IDP will relate to the theme of your current module and last for the duration of that module.

Here is an example of what an IDP will look like. Fill in your own IDP on the form provided.

1. IDP Module Name:

CHRIST-CENTERED DISCIPLESHIP

2. Spiritual Companion: Who is the spiritual companion who will encourage and support you in the next stage of your spiritual journey of growing as an Ambassador of Jesus? They will remain your spiritual companion throughout the current module.

JOHN WILCOX (Your choice of spiritual companion is added in session 3. Leave blank for now.)

3. Personal vision statement: This includes two parts: (a) What do you see in your life today that you would like to change in order to become more effective as an Ambassador for Jesus? (b) Describe how you would like to see yourself in the future. Before you start writing, take a moment to pray for God to guide your thoughts.

- CURRENTLY, I DO NOT HAVE A REGULAR OR VERY MEANINGFUL DEVOTIONAL LIFE.
- I WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP A DEVOTIONAL LIFE THAT CAN EQUIP ME SPIRITUALLY TO BE AN EFFECTIVE AMBASSADOR FOR JESUS.

4. Expected evidence of change: After looking at your personal vision statement, list the evidence you might expect to see that reveals you are growing in Christ.

- I THINK AN EFFECTIVE AMBASSADOR IS SOMEONE WHO IS ALWAYS PRAYING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO REVEAL THE CHARACTER OF JESUS WHEREVER THEY GO. THAT IS WHAT I WANT FOR MY LIFE.

5. Next steps: List the practical steps you will take to accomplish your personal discipleship vision. Think about how these steps will also shape your daily devotions with God.

- SET MY ALARM CLOCK FOR 7AM TO START MY DEVOTIONS
- SPEND 30 MINUTES IN PRAYER AND BIBLE READING
- REPEAT BEFORE I GO TO SLEEP
- FIND A BOOK TO READ THAT TEACHES DIFFERENT WAYS TO STUDY THE BIBLE
- PRAY EACH DAY FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR GOD TO USE ME AS HIS AMBASSADOR

6. Reflection: How did I do? This is completed at the end of the module. It gives you a chance to reflect on what worked well and what you would like to improve in the future. You can compare your expected evidences of change to what actually happened.

- I REALLY ENJOYED THESE LAST FEW WEEKS. THE MORE I READ AND UNDERSTOOD, THE MORE CONFIDENT I BECAME TO PRAY FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR GOD TO USE ME. I THINK I WILL EXPAND THE TIME FOR DEVOTIONS I HAVE IN THE EVENING, AND NOW THAT I HAVE READ A BOOK ON BIBLE STUDY, I WOULD LIKE TO READ ANOTHER ON INTERCESSORY PRAYER. I HAVE FOUND THAT I REALLY ENJOY PRAYING FOR OTHERS.

basic template for teaching sessions

This template will be used during most in-house teaching sessions. There will be variations in the format depending on the focus for the day.

welcome & activity

2+ min

1. General welcome and opening prayer.
2. A short getting-to-know you activity. As friendships continually deepen, so the ability to encourage and support each other spiritually deepens.

did you know?

13 minutes

An activity that introduces the theme for the day.

mission briefing

10 minutes

A simple Bible study that gives the biblical foundation for the theme done in groups of two or three. It will be helpful for leaders to circulate around the room to listen in on conversations to see that participants are going in the right direction and to answer questions.

thinking it through

5 minutes

A personal reflection time where each participant writes down what they have personally learned from the Bible study and how this applies to their own life as an ambassador. To be shared briefly with their spiritual companion who will be a spiritual encourager during the curriculum.

reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

40 minutes

An activity that expands on the main theme for the lesson. This section is called “reflecting Jesus and His kingdom” because an Ambassador’s main task is to represent who Jesus is to others, as well as what the kingdom of heaven stands for.

next steps

15 minutes

An Ambassador for Jesus will grow spiritually and will witness in everyday life beyond the training sessions. Therefore, each participant will develop an individual discipleship plan that will help them grow as an ambassador for Jesus when they are outside of the learning environment.

At the beginning of each module in the curriculum, participants will develop an individual discipleship plan (IDP) that will guide their personal spiritual journey during that section. Each IDP will focus on the theme of that section. “Next Steps” is a time for participants to reflect on how their IDP is working and to pray for each other in what they aim to do next. This will be done with their spiritual companion. A spiritual companion is friend who prays for and encourages their own companion over a set period of time.

summary

5 minutes

As a whole group, this is an opportunity to summarize what participants have learned during the session. It is a time for the leader to generally review what has been done and to ask for volunteers to briefly share what they have learned.

SESSION 1

I am called to be an ambassador for another world



SESSION 1

I am called to be an ambassador for another world



did you know...

An Ambassador is a diplomatic agent of the highest rank accredited to a foreign government or sovereign as the resident representative of his own government or sovereign or appointed for a special and often temporary diplomatic assignment

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition

God has called me to be His Ambassador

“So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making His appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, ‘Come back to God!’”

2 Corinthians 5:20, NLT





mission briefing

The Bible is God's book to show His Ambassadors how to live on earth while representing His kingdom in heaven. It explains who God is, who we are, and where we are going. At the heart of this book is the revelation of Jesus, and that only through His Holy Spirit can His Ambassadors make an eternal impact in the world. Before sin, we would have known how to live without having it written down because God's laws and principles would have been written on our hearts and minds. But while we live with very forgetful memories, God has chosen to write everything down for us.

1. As Ambassadors we use words to encourage people to turn to Jesus. But who we are—our characters—demonstrate the truth and power of our words. In other words, who we are makes our words believable. In Ezekiel 36:23–26, God promises to reveal His holiness to the nations “through” His people. In these verses, what is the most important thing that will enable you to reveal to others the truth about God?

2. Ellen White wrote that character is defined as our “thoughts and feelings combined.” From Matthew 5:1–12, what do you think are the thoughts and feelings that will shape an ambassador's mind and heart as they live out these qualities of the kingdom of God on earth?

THOUGHTS

FEELINGS





thinking it through

1. From what you have just studied, what is the most important idea you have had? Why?

2. When choosing to live as an Ambassador for Jesus in your culture, what do you find most challenging?



reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

What's Changed?

Time magazine reported the following problems in schools in the 1940's compared to the 1980's.

1940's	1980's	Today?
Talking Chewing gum Making noise Running in halls Getting out of place in line Improper clothing Littering	Drug abuse Alcohol abuse Pregnancy Suicide Rape, Robbery, Assault Burglary, Arson, Bombings	

1. What are the problems students face in school today?
2. Why do you think there has been such a change through the years?
3. Think about the laws, principles, and values that are shaping your life and character—maybe even without you realizing it. Ask yourself the following questions:



- What laws are shaping my life today and where are they from?
- What principles are shaping my life today and where are they from?
- What values are shaping my life today and where are they from?

4. Think about the way God would like to shape your life and character in the future. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance as you answer the following question: In the future, what laws, principles, and values do I want to shape my life as I pursue the character of Jesus? What Bible texts will help direct my choices?

My Commitment

“So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making His appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, ‘Come back to God!’”

2 Corinthians 5:20, NLT



I, _____, desire to live as an Ambassador for Jesus and His kingdom. In response to God’s desire to reveal Himself through me, I choose to dedicate everything I am to Him—that He may use me to reach others in any way He chooses.

Signed _____ Date _____

Witnessed by _____

Witnessed by _____





SESSION 2

I am on an eternal journey to
reflect Jesus



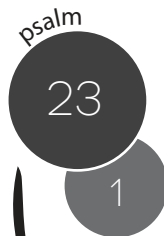
SESSION 2

I am on an eternal journey to reflect Jesus

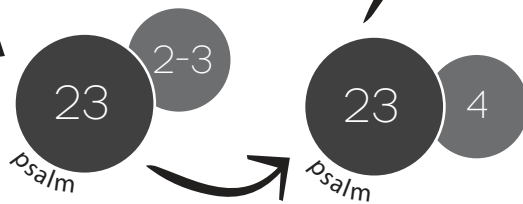


did you know...

1 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

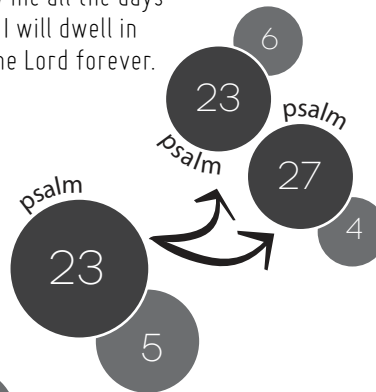


2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,
3 he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.



4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

6 Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.



5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

4 One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

Psalms 23 and 27 describe the eternal journey of our lives...





mission briefing

Read the “did you know?” section. Psalms 23 and 27 help us to understand the journey Ambassadors are on and why they take it. As this journey to the Shepherd’s house is not always easy, here are six encouragements as to why Ambassadors should keep going.

1. No matter how unprepared and weak we might feel on our journey, the Shepherd promises to provide everything we need: “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not be in want” (23:1).
2. No matter how bewildering or confusing our journey might be, walking in the Shepherd’s paths will always accomplish the Shepherd’s purposes for our lives, “He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake” (Verse 3). Notice how these paths are all called “paths of righteousness” (NIV) or “right paths” (NRSV). But why are they called right or righteous paths? First, they are right paths because they lead to the right place, the Shepherd’s home. Second, they are right paths because they keep us on a journey in the company of the right person, the Shepherd. Third, they are right paths because they shape us into the right people. Notice how we travel the paths of righteousness “for His name’s sake” (23:3). “For His name’s sake” means for the honor and glory of the Shepherd.
3. No matter how frightening our journey might be, the darkness is not a place to be feared, for it is a place the Shepherd uses to mature us—whether we have gone there on our own, or whether He has led us there: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me” (23:4). It is in the darkness, like no other place, that we see God deliver us from attack with the rod and rescue us with His staff.
4. No matter how easy we expect our journey to be, the Shepherd may allow our enemies to surround us in order for us to gain a deeper understanding of His love for us: “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows” (23:5). We may be tempted to think that our enemies will steal God’s blessings for us, but they cannot. No one can take what God gives to us.
5. No matter how lonely our journey may appear to be, the Shepherd is always present. “Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life” (23:6).
6. The end of the journey enables the Psalmist to “dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” The journey of Psalm 23 finishes at the house of the Lord, but the Psalmist does not explain why he is going there—but in Psalm 27 he does. The “one thing” he wants in His life is to “gaze upon the beauty of the Lord” (27:4). The beauty of Christ, the perfection of His character, is something that motivates the Psalmist’s whole being when the valley is dark and enemies surround him. Nothing is more precious to the Psalmist than the beauty of Jesus. Most importantly, it is as he gazes upon Jesus that he is changed to become like Him.





thinking it through

1. How is it possible that both good and bad experiences in life's journey can develop the character of Jesus in you? To what extent has this been true of your life so far?

2. What needs to happen before your greatest desire is to reflect the beauty of Jesus?



reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

Creating an Individual Discipleship Plan (IDP)

Refer to page 11 for guidelines on how to create your IDP.





SESSION 3

an ambassador is designed to grow
in community

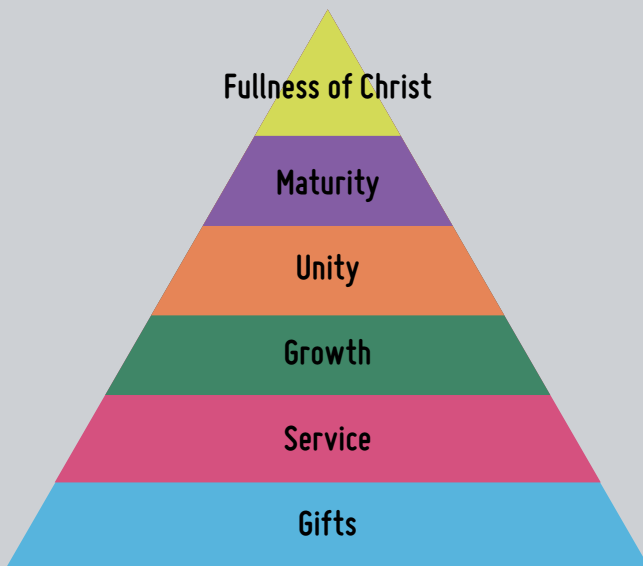


SESSION 3

an ambassador is designed to grow in community



did you know...



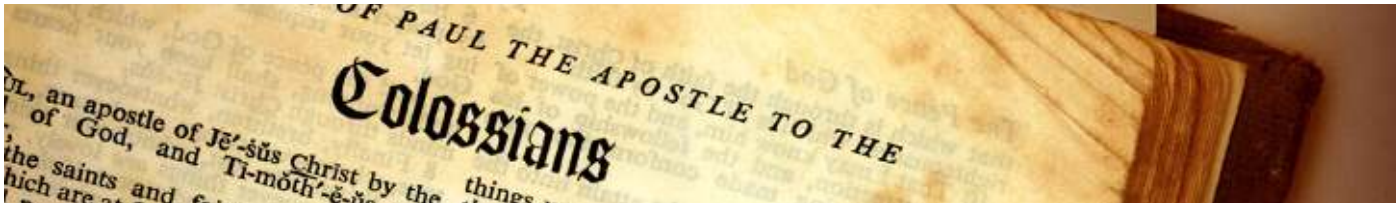
The Ephesians 4 Pyramid

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-13

growing in Christ—that we may live as His ambassadors—is designed by God to happen in the context of His body—the Church.





mission briefing

Read Ephesians 4:11-13. Why do you think Paul places “attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” in the context of the community working together? Why don't we become like Jesus on our own?

In Paul's mind, experiencing the fullness of Christ was not a private matter, but was designed to happen best in the context of the church community—a community where the gifts of the Holy Spirit were being used. Paul teaches that as a church we are the body of Jesus. We are all different, but we are united together and, most importantly, united with the Head, Jesus.

Jesus suggests that something special happens when we are united. Read John 17:20-23. What does Jesus identify as the purpose of unity for:

- a) Christians? _____
- b) The world? _____

Growing together is important for two further reasons. The first is our deep sinfulness. Ever since Adam and Eve sinned, each of us is born into the world with a natural tendency to live in opposition to God and the ways of His kingdom. As David laments, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5). So by the time we begin to choose to follow Christ, we already have many sinful habits that are deeply ingrained within us and are difficult to undo all at once. The second challenge is our supernatural enemy. As Paul clearly identifies, “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12). We cannot survive against such a supernatural enemy with human power. We are continually in need of supernatural power from outside of ourselves that only God provides. And when we work together, we can encourage each other so that we don't become discouraged.





thinking it through

1. Some people feel uneasy sharing their spiritual life with others. In what ways do you have difficulty sharing spiritual things with others?

2. What advantages are there in developing a spiritual community where everyone is open to sharing how God is working in their lives? How might such a community be helpful for you?



reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

Introducing Spiritual Companions

Solomon gives some helpful and practical counsel:

“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

While having support from others is important in all areas of life, it is particularly important in our spiritual lives. This is why God created us to live as Christians in the community of the church, so that we will be continually surrounded by others to encourage and support us. This encouragement and support is also why Jesus sent the disciples out to minister two by two.

Each time you create an individual discipleship plan (IDP), you will choose someone to share your spiritual journey with for the duration of the module. Spend a moment praying for God’s guidance, then consider the following questions:

1. Who might God want me to spiritually encourage and support?
2. Who might God want to be a spiritual encouragement and support to me?
3. Who do I feel comfortable with? Who will keep my trust?

What do Spiritual Companions do each week?—Next Steps

From now on, every lesson will have a time for Spiritual Companions to come together to discuss where each one is in working through their IDP. Each time you come together, you will ask each other three simple questions:

- How is your spiritual life going?
- How are things going with your IDP?
- How can I pray for you—for your spiritual life and your IDP?

Choosing a Spiritual Companion

Now it is time to choose your Spiritual Companion for the rest of this module. Write their name in your IDP that you created last time.

SESSION 4

an ambassador's role is to honor Jesus



SESSION 4

an ambassador's role is to honor Jesus in front of the universe



did you know...

One day God cried through Zechariah, “Come! Come! Flee from the land of the north . . . Come, Zion! Escape, you who live in Daughter Babylon!” (Zechariah 2:6-7). At that moment, Zechariah was living among the remnant in Jerusalem. This was a remnant of Israel who had followed Zerubbabel back to Jerusalem from captivity for the specific purpose of rebuilding the temple and city. But this remnant had faced opposition, become discouraged, and had stopped work.

Haggai notes that they were now focused on enjoying the comforts of their own houses (Haggai 1:4). As well as bringing them encouragement, Zechariah appeals to their relatives who chose to remain in Babylon. While warning of the fall of Babylon, Zechariah’s main concern was for

the remnant’s relatives to leave Babylon and join them all in the restoration of the temple and the city—the place of God’s presence.

Years later, when Paul called on the Corinthians to a life of purity, he quoted Isaiah’s call to come out of Babylon to encourage those compromising to enter into God’s presence—into the “temple of the Living God” (2 Corinthians 6:16-18).

Then, at the end of the Bible when “another voice” speaks through the end-time remnant for their spiritual relatives to come out of Babylon (Revelation 18:4), the ultimate invitation is to be ready to live in the presence of God in the eternal temple of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2-3).

So the call to come out of Babylon is a call

into God’s presence. The focus is not simply on the problems of Babylon, but on the work of restoring what is broken down.

Paul writes, “Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit” (2 Corinthians 6:19)? Therefore, underpinning the prophetic message of Revelation 18:4—to call people out of the confusion of spiritual Babylon—is the call to discipleship—a call to restore human hearts as the temples of God’s presence. It is a call for broken people to enter into a community utterly devoted to restoring the temple of the human heart back into the image of God, that in God’s presence, they may be transformed to reflect the face of Jesus.

Such a community honors Jesus greatly.

the call to come out... is a call to come in:

Ambassadors are to call people across the world to come out of spiritual Babylon, that they may come into a community devoted to rebuilding broken lives back into the character of Jesus.





mission briefing

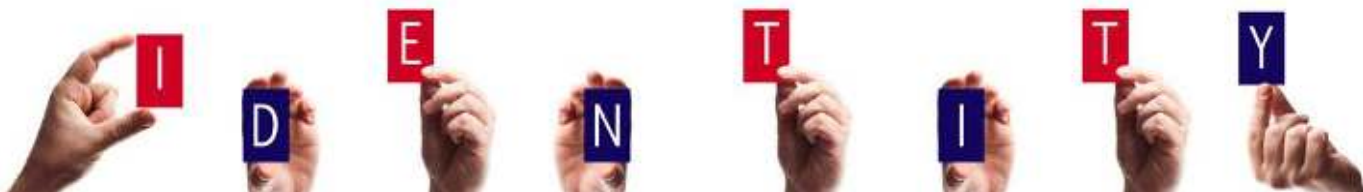
In “did you know?” we saw that the final call to get ready for Jesus’ return is a call into a community that is honoring Jesus by restoring His image in broken human beings—people whose lives have been broken by the sin introduced into the world by Satan.

However, this restoration of human beings in the image of God has always been God’s purpose from the beginning of history.

1. Read Romans 8:29. What does Paul say is God’s purpose for us?

2. How does Paul describe His own experience in 2 Corinthians 3:18?

3. Read Galatians 4:19. What was Paul’s own purpose as an Ambassador for God?



thinking it through

1. When you as an ambassador reveal the character of Jesus in the middle of this great controversy between Jesus and Satan, Jesus is honored. The watching universe knows that you didn’t have to follow Jesus, but you chose to live for Him. As you reflect the character of Jesus, you reveal His goodness and that Satan is a liar in His accusations that God is unfair and unjust. How do you feel about having such a great responsibility?



2. As an Ambassador aiming to reveal the character of Jesus in the middle of a supernatural battle, what do you think you need to be praying for?



reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

So far, we have looked at honoring in two ways. First, we honor Jesus as we prepare the world to meet Him, calling people to come out of spiritual Babylon and into communities devoted to rebuilding His image in broken human hearts. Second, like Paul, we honor Jesus on a personal level as we reveal Jesus within our own lives and make the restoration of the image of Jesus the purpose of our own ministry.

Now, let's look at this from a cosmic perspective.

The Bible is a story. If you look at the handout, "Reflecting Jesus in the Great Controversy," you will see seven main events in this story—like scenes in a play. Each of these seven scenes brings new information, and each scene is important to understand the play as a whole. We could say that every part of the Bible relates to one or more of these seven events in some way.

Notice that the story is wrapped inside a cosmic supernatural battle. This is the environment in which the Ambassador lives. Our world, and our work, is like a theatre in the cosmos, with heaven and untold numbers of other worlds watching.

The Lord Jesus is making experiments on human hearts through the exhibition of His mercy and abundant grace. He is effecting transformations so amazing that Satan, with all His triumphant boasting, with all His confederacy of evil united against God and the laws of His government, stands viewing them as a fortress impregnable to His sophistries and delusions. They are to him an incomprehensible mystery. The angels of God, seraphim and cherubim, the powers commissioned to cooperate with human agencies, look on with astonishment and joy, that fallen men, once children of wrath, are through the training of Christ developing characters after the divine similitude, to be sons and daughters of God, to act an important part in the occupations and pleasures of heaven.

Ellen White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, 18



Reflecting Jesus in the Great Controversy

Fall of Satan and his angels from heaven

Satan wanted to be like God. Because of His pride, Satan started a war in heaven against Jesus and the kingdom of heaven. As a result, Satan and one third of the angels were expelled from heaven. Satan's pride and anger increased as he later began trying to destroy the people Jesus made in His own image. As a fallen angel, Satan and his angels work invisibly to human eyes. **Isaiah 14:12–15; Ezekiel 28:14–17; Revelation 12:7–9; Ephesians 6:10–12.**

Creation—in God's perfect image

Jesus created us in His image— His character. Everything He made was beautiful and caused great joy for Him and all in the universe. **Genesis 1:26–27; Genesis 1:31; Job 38:4–7; Colossians 1:15–17.**

The Fall—God's image de-formed

Soon after creation, Eve went to the tree of good and evil—the very place God told her not to go. It was there that Satan was able to tempt her. Once she and Adam disobeyed God, they suddenly realized that they were without clothes. This sin had broken God's character within them. It appears that bright glory had clothed them, representing God's glorious character within them. So now that Christ's character in them was broken, the glory around them vanished. But more than that, they were beginning to experience the consequences of their disobedience—they were beginning to die.

How could they, and all their children who would follow, be rescued from the consequences of their sin? **Genesis 3:1–12.**

Salvation—Re-formation of God's image

Sin always leads to death. As sinners we are condemned to die eternally, but Jesus came and died in our place. He took the punishment for sin that we should have taken. So when I trust that Jesus has died for me, God considers that I am saved from the consequence of my sin in the future—eternal death. But He also saves from sin in the present. As I put my faith in the re-creative work of Jesus through the Holy Spirit, Jesus restores His own character back into me—the character that became de-formed in Adam and Eve in Eden. When the Holy Spirit continues to work in us, we begin to reflect Jesus in increasing ways. **Isaiah 53:4–6; Romans 3:21–24; 6:23; Romans 8:29; Galatians 4:19; 2 Corinthians 3:18.**

Pre-Advent Judgement

Satan has always accused God of being unfair and unjust. So before Jesus returns, God holds a judgement that records how His decisions about our future are actually based on our own choices—for or against Him. This is an open judgement, where the whole universe will ultimately be able to see that God has been right, good, and fair. We are saved by our faith—our resting trust—in Jesus. Such a faith always



results in good works. So the type of people we become and the sorts of things we do are the evidence that Jesus looks at to see if our faith is genuine. **Romans 14:10–12; Daniel 7:9–10; Matthew 25:31–46; Galatians 5:22–23; Revelation 20.**

Second Coming

Jesus promised He would return and will do so physically—just as when He came the first time. This will not be a secret, but a visible, cosmic event for all to see. At this time, in “the twinkling of an eye,” those who died in Christ will be resurrected. With the faithful who are alive we will be reunited and all be clothed with the same glory that Adam and Eve wore in Eden. **John 14:1–3; Acts 1:9–10; Matthew 24:24–27; 1 Corinthians 15:35–55.**

Destruction of evil and eternal re-creation

After 1000 years with Jesus in heaven, we will judge Satan, His angels, and the wicked. After this judgement has been announced, God will destroy the world by fire and recreate it as He intended at the beginning. We will then live on the earth, growing more and more in the character of Jesus for the rest of eternity.

1 Corinthians 6:3; Revelation 20:7–15; Revelation 21:1–5; 2 Corinthians 3:18.





SESSION 5

openness

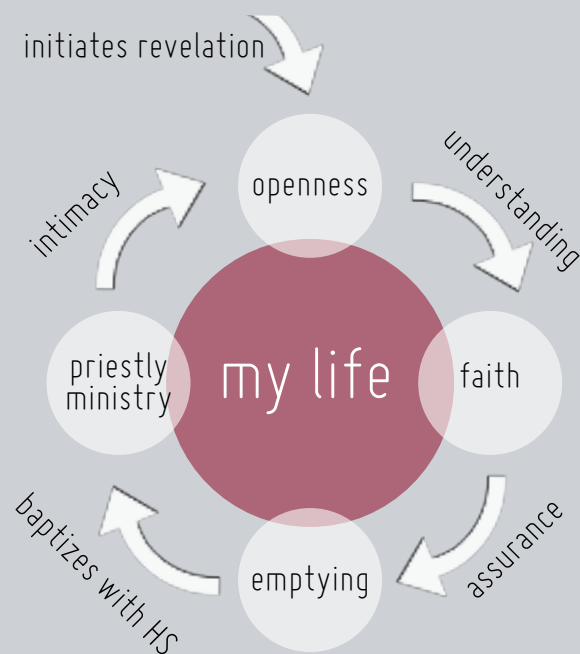


SESSION 5

openness—my first response to God



did you know...



This diagram helps us to understand the ways God works in our lives. This is important to remember because ambassadors serve primarily out of who they are, not just what they say.

The arrows relate to what God does. He initiates communication with me, He gives me understanding, He brings assurance that I am His child, He baptizes me with His Holy Spirit, and He draws me continually into deeper relationship with the Trinity.

The four outer circles relate to what I do in response to God's work. If I am open to God's revelation, He will give me understanding. If I place my faith in what he shows me, He will bring assurance. If I am willing to sacrifice everything for Him and empty myself like this, He will fill me with His Holy Spirit. If I devote myself to ministry, God will bring me deeper into His presence.

So there are four things that are important for me to do that are directly related to my spiritual growth: 1) Openness to God, 2) Faith in God's words, 3) Death to self—the emptying of my natural self as preparation for the divine filling of the Holy Spirit, 4) Ministry. These four aspects relate to how we believe.

ambassadors are changed to reflect Jesus not only by what they believe, but how they believe—and it begins with openness





mission briefing

At the beginning of the New Testament, Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah to explain that the Saviour would be called “Emmanuel—which means ‘God with us’” (Matthew 1:23). The Bible makes it clear that we are not left alone on earth, but God had to take the initiative to come to us because “no one seeks God” (Romans 3:11). God took the initiative, first in Eden (Genesis 3:8–9), and later when He designed the tabernacle, saying, “Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8).

Now imagine it is the time for the morning offerings at the tabernacle. As an Israelite, you call your family together and stand at the entrance of your tent, facing the sanctuary where the offerings will be made. They are made by the priests on behalf of the whole of Israel, symbolizing the consecration of your family and the rest of Israel to God. But wait. You don’t have to go to the front of your tent. You can ignore everything and keep eating your breakfast. So what is the difference between the person who recognizes his/her need to consecrate himself/herself to God, and the one who doesn’t care?

1. What do the following Bible verses teach about the meaning of a hard heart? Exodus 7:13, 22; 8:15, 19; 9:12; Mark 6:52; 8:17.

2. The opposite of a hard heart is a soft “heart of flesh.” What does the Bible teach about the characteristics of a heart of flesh in Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26?

A person with a hard heart is closed to God, while the one with a heart of flesh is open to the impressions of the Holy Spirit. God may be speaking, but unless someone is actually open to listening, God’s voice will not be heard or understood. An Ambassador’s heart will begin to be re-formed to reflect Christ to others as we learn to be increasingly open to God and respond to what He longs to share with us.



thinking it through

1. What do you think about the idea in Romans 3:11 that, naturally, you will never look for God unless God comes looking for you first?



2. How open are you towards God? From God's perspective, how could He tell if you are open or closed?



reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

1. Becoming aware of being closed

We can be closed to God's voice in many ways—not only because of sin. From the list below, ask the Holy Spirit to show you how you may be closed to God—even though you may be a Christian of many years. Is there anything that you need to add to the list?

Sin	Emotional	Physical	Mental
bitterness	hurt	illness	inflexible
unforgiveness	exhaustion	stress	cynical
resentment	other?	feeling driven	condemning
pride		agitation	judgemental
other?		other?	other?

2. Prayer

We are all closed to the voice of God's Holy Spirit in some way. As you mature as an Ambassador, God may show you other ways in which you block out His voice so that you may hear Him more clearly and respond with greater devotion and faithfulness.

Write a prayer in which you ask God how you are currently closed to His voice. Also write a response to what you sense the Holy Spirit is telling you about the areas in which you are closed to Him.





SESSION 6

faith



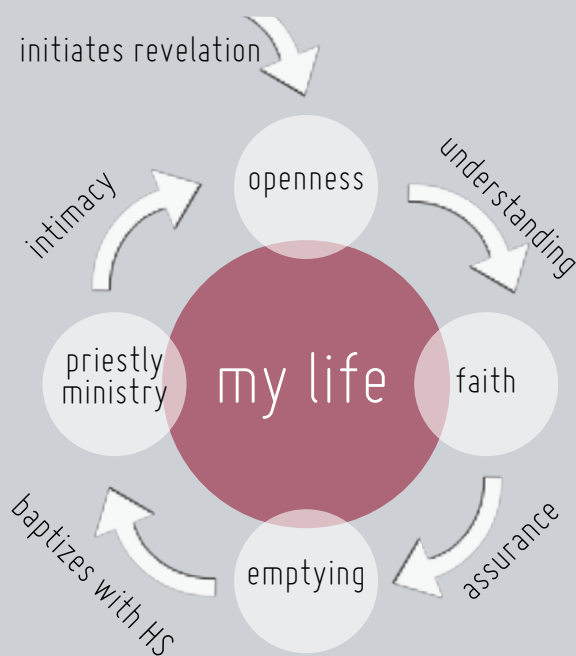
SESSION 6

faith—in what God has shown me



did you know...

Here is what famous people through the centuries
have said about faith and believing:



If you believe what you like in the gospel, and reject what you don't like, it is not the gospel you believe, but yourself.

—Augustine of Hippo (354–430)

Man prefers to believe what he prefers to be true. —Francis Bacon (1561–1626)

It is so hard to believe because it is so hard to obey. —Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855)

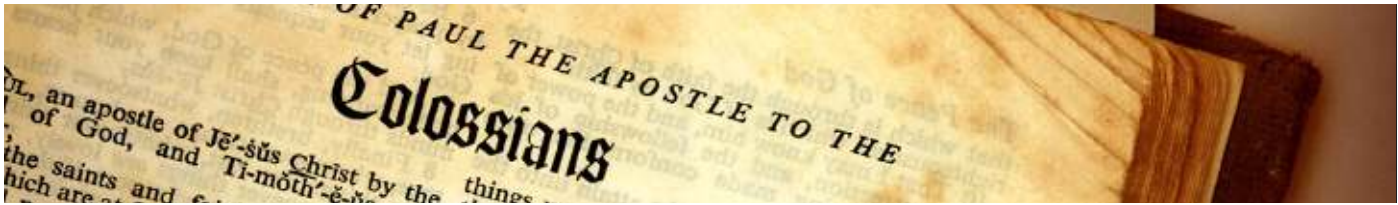
A man who has faith must be prepared not only to be a martyr, but to be a fool. —G. K. Chesterton (1874–1936)

Don't be afraid to take a big step if one is indicated. You can't cross a chasm in two small jumps. —David Lloyd George (1863–1945)

Faith and thought belong together, and believing is impossible without thinking. —John R. W. Stott (1921–2011)

when God gives us understanding, it is a call for us to believe what He says





mission briefing

In the last study on openness, we saw how the Old Testament uses the symbols of a hard and soft heart. However, the Bible also describes the heart as being circumcised or uncircumcised. While the meanings overlap, the idea of a circumcised heart is slightly different and illustrates another important spiritual principle.

1. Read Genesis 17:10–26 and Exodus 12:44, 48. What does the Bible teach about the meaning of circumcision?

At the time of the Israelites, circumcision indicated belief in God's covenant and membership to God's community. However, it was still possible to be physically circumcised, but not believe God's words. This was dangerous for the people. It could be easy for them to think that just because they were circumcised, then they were loyal members of God's family. However, God was not merely looking for an external sign, but an internal commitment of faith.

As the Bible makes clear, "without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Later in the Gospels, Jesus makes it continually clear that miracles are only possible if faith is present. And just as faith in Jesus was required for physical healing, so faith is required for the miracle of a life reformed in the character of Jesus.

2. Read Jesus' comments on faith in Matthew 8:10; 9:2, 29–30; 15:28. What do you think enabled these people to take Jesus seriously while many others did not?





thinking it through

1. Why do you think Jesus emphasizes faith as a critical ingredient in our lives in order to be transformed?

2. What are some of the personal challenges you face that prevent you from believing in God completely?



reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

Have you ever prayed to be different inside, but ended up staying just the same? If so, what can we do about this lack of power? Here's a promise from God to you that can help:

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” (2 Peter 1:3-4)

Someone calculated that there are 1260 promises in the Bible. And did you know that God's promises are all ultimately focused on what Peter is describing—for us to reflect the character of Jesus and avoid being hurt by sin? For these promises to work, however, James tells us bluntly that when we come to God, we must believe that God will do what He has promised. “But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does” (James 1:6-8).



But how can we ask God and be confident that we are asking for the right things? We could ask God for a Ferrari sports car, but there is no power in that prayer! Why? Because nowhere in the Bible does God promise to give any of us a sports car! However, when we know what God does promise us, then we can pray with complete confidence that God will answer. There is power in such prayers.

So when we pray according to God's words, our faith grows, and this faith brings God's power into our lives for change. As you may know, Jesus performed miracles in the gospel stories that brought change into people's lives because of their faith in His words.

So where can we find God's promises that bring the promise of His power to us?

First, there are promises where God promises to do something or give us something. Look at some of these in the box below.

I AM:

1. I AM LOVED

- Nothing can separate me from God's love (Romans 8:37-39)
- I am loved and chosen by God (1 Thessalonians 1:4)

2. I AM SECURE

- I am forgiven because of the riches of God's grace (Ephesians 1:7-8)
- I am not condemned for my past sins (Romans 8:1-2)
- I am sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13)

3. I AM VALUED

- I am God's treasured possession (Deuteronomy 14:2)
- I am being transformed into the likeness of God (2 Corinthians 3:18)

4. I AM EMPOWERED

- God lives in me as Jesus lives in the Father and the Father in Jesus (John 17:20-22)
- I can do everything that God wills because He gives me strength (Philippians 4:13)

5. I AM PROVIDED FOR

- I have direct access to God's throne for all my needs (Hebrews 4:14-16)
- The God who died to save me will certainly give me everything I will ever need (Romans 8:31-32)

I HAVE:

1. I HAVE A NEW PURPOSE

- To glorify God by revealing God's character to others (John 15:8)
- To do good works for God (Ephesians 2:10)

2. I HAVE A NEW FAMILY

- I am a member of heaven's family—a child of God (John 1:12)
- I am a member of God's family on earth—His church (Romans 12:5)

3. I HAVE NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

- I have been bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
- I am an ambassador for God's kingdom (2 Corinthians 5:20)
- I am a royal priest for God (1 Peter 2:9)
- I am a worker with God (1 Corinthians 3:9)

4. I HAVE A NEW FUTURE

- Where everything works for good (Romans 8:28)
- I have an inheritance in heaven (1 Peter 1:3-4)

Second, descriptions of God Himself are also promises. Paul tells us that it was God's plan that we become like His Son: "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son..." (Romans 8:29). So when we read descriptions of Jesus, these can become promises for our prayers to become like Him. (This does not include descriptions of God that belong to God alone; for example, that He is all powerful, all knowing, or everywhere at the same time, etc.)



Characteristics of God alone that can give us confidence that our prayers will be acted upon:

- Almighty, Isaiah 6:1-3; Isaiah 14:27
- Always present, Isaiah 41:10; Matthew 28:19-20
- Sovereign, 2 Samuel 7:22; Daniel 4:34-35
- Creator and Re-Creator, Isaiah 44:24; Isaiah 44:2-3
- Eternal and Infinite, Isaiah 26:4; Hebrews 1:10-12
- Praiseworthy and Glorious, 1 Chronicles 29:10-13; Psalm 145:4-5

Characteristics of God that we share with Him—as people whom He longs to restore into His image.

- Loving, Exodus 15:13; 1 John 4:11-17
- Kind, Isaiah 63:7; Ephesians 2:6-7
- Compassionate, Psalm 103:13-14; Mark 1:41
- Gracious, John 1:6
- Merciful, Ephesians 2:4-5
- Patient, 2 Peter 3:9,15
- Long-suffering, Matthew 23:37
- Peaceful, Isaiah 9:6; 2 Corinthians 13:11
- Humble, 2 Corinthians 10:1
- Meek, John 13:1-5
- Just, Psalm 45:6; Isaiah 5:16
- Saving and Restoring, 2 Samuel 22:3; 1 Peter 5:10

- Wise, Ephesians 1:17; 2 Timothy 3:14-15
- Pure and Holy, Exodus 3:2-5; 1 John 3:2-3
- Truthful, John 14:6; Psalm 119:160
- Righteous, Psalm 119:75-76; 1 John 2:1
- Protecting, Isaiah 43:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 3:3
- Persevering, Judges 2:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:4-5
- Joy, Nehemiah 8:10; Zephaniah 3:17
- Gentle, 1 Kings 19:12; Luke 18:15-16
- Self-controlled, Galatians 5:22-23
- Good, 1 Chronicles 16:34; Nahum 1:7
- Faithful, Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 71:22-23
- Sacrificial, John 3:16; 1 John 4:10-11
- Forgiving, Exodus 34:5-7; Psalm 86:5

Look through the promises in the first list. Which of these promises do you need to hear the most today? Look up the Bible verses and imagine that God is speaking these promises directly to you now. What does it mean to you to hear these promises? Write down your thoughts about these promises.

Now go back over the qualities of God in the second list that He longs for you to reveal more deeply. Which of these qualities of God do you find most important for you to reveal in your life and why?





SESSION 7

dying to self

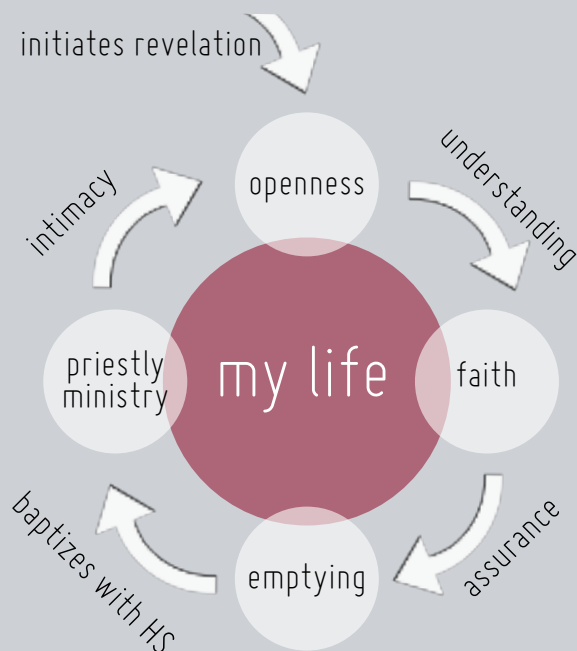


SESSION 7

dying to self—knowing my identity in Jesus, I will give everything to Him



did you know...



“Why is a lamb always gentle? Because that is its nature. Does it cost the lamb any trouble to be gentle? No. Why not? It is so beautiful and gentle. Has a lamb to study to be gentle? No. Why does that come so easy? It is its nature. And a wolf—why does it cost a wolf no trouble to be cruel, and to put its fangs into the poor lamb or sheep? Because that is its nature. It has not to summon up its courage; the wolf-nature is there.”

—Andrew Murrey

as my own nature is corrupted by sin, Jesus is not looking to modify or upgrade my nature—He is looking to replace it completely with His own—as soon as self is dead





mission briefing

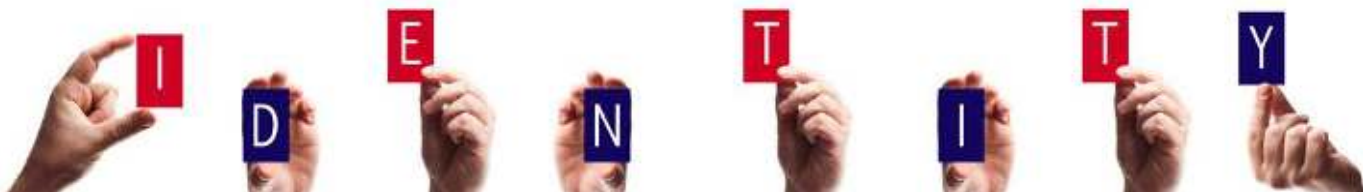
1. In the last lesson, we looked at faith. When we trust God, what does the Holy Spirit do in us (Ephesians 1:13 and Romans 8:16)?
-

When we have the assurance that we are God's children, we will be willing to give God everything we have and are—because we know we are safe in His hands. However, doing this—sometimes called dying to self—is hard. This is because when sin entered the world it corrupted our human nature. Our challenge is not simply to stop doing wrong things (which we normally call sins), but to deal with a corrupted human nature that instinctively craves what is opposed to God.

The tabernacle begins to explain how to address this problem. At the heart of the morning and evening services in the tabernacle were the sacrifices. At each service, a one-year-old male lamb was killed, symbolizing the death of Jesus who would die in the place of sinners. As this service took place twice a day, every day of the year, it symbolized that the consecration of God's people was continually dependent on the sacrifice of Jesus.

2. What does Jesus say we are to do if we are to be His disciples (Luke 9:23-24)?
-
3. Paul explained His own practice when he wrote, "I die daily" (1 Corinthians 15:31). According to what Paul writes in Romans 12:1-2, what is the purpose of becoming a living sacrifice? Why is death necessary to achieve this purpose?
-

The cross had only one purpose—death. Like the daily tabernacle sacrifices, Jesus' call—that Paul obeyed—is nothing less than a daily call to give everything we have and are to Him. Without the continual putting to death of our sinful natures, the Holy Spirit will have difficulty revealing Christ in us. This is important, because without the ability to reveal Jesus, Ambassadors will not be able to witness.



thinking it through

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer famously wrote that "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." What do you think personally about this calling?
-



2. The disciples had given up their livelihoods and friends to follow Jesus. They probably imagined they had given up everything. But when Jesus discusses that He is going to die, they became angry (Mark 8:31-33). It appears that death was not part of their understanding of the call to discipleship. What parts of your life do you have difficulty giving up completely to God?
-



reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

Look through the Bible texts and quotations on dying to self by Ellen White. Which ones are the most important for you? You can write your personal reflections below:

dying to self in the writings of Ellen White

- 1. Death to self symbolized by Jesus before His ministry begins.** Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented (Matthew 3:13-15).
- 2. Death to self the doorway into discipleship.** Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it (Luke 9:23-24).
- 3. Death to self requires a choice.** Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming (Colossians 3:5-6).
- 4. Death to self so sin will not master us.** In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace (Romans 6:11- 14).
- 5. Death to self goes before life in Christ.** Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him (Romans 6:8).
- 6. Death to self every day.** I die daily (1 Corinthians 15:31).
- 7. Dying to reflect Jesus.** Until self is laid upon the altar of sacrifice, Christ will not be reflected in the character. When self is buried, and Christ occupies the throne of the heart, there will be a revelation of principles that will clear the moral atmosphere surrounding the soul (Letter 108, 1899, MS 1903.)
- 8. Death provides space for Jesus.** We must be emptied of self in order to give room to Jesus, but how many have their hearts so filled with idols that they have no room for the Redeemer of the world. The world holds the hearts of men in captivity. They center their thoughts and affections upon their business, their

position, their family. They hold to their opinions and ways, and cherish them as idols in the soul; but we cannot afford to yield ourselves to the service of self, holding to our own ways and ideas, and excluding the truth of God. We must be emptied of self. But this is not all that is required; for when we have renounced our idols, the vacuum must be supplied. If the heart is left desolate, and the vacuum not supplied, it will be in the condition of him whose house was "empty, swept, and garnished," garnished," but without a guest to occupy it. The evil spirit took unto himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they entered in and dwelt there; and the last state of that man was worse than the first (RH, February 23, 1892).

- 9. Complete death.** God will breathe this life into every soul who dies to self and lives to Christ. But entire self-renunciation is required. Unless this takes place, we carry with us the evil that destroys our happiness. I wish we could be what God would have us,—all light in the Lord. We need to reach a higher standard. But we can never do this until self is laid on the altar, until we let the Holy Spirit control us, molding and fashioning us according to the divine similitude (ST, October 11, 1899).
- 10. Daily death.** Those who work for God are daily to empty the heart of self, that they may be cleansed of their hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong. They are to depend wholly upon Him who taught as never man taught. Unless the soul-temple is daily emptied of self, and prepared for the reception of the Holy Spirit, self will rule the entire being. The words and acts will be tarnished with selfishness. Christ will not appear in the life; but there will be seen a self-confidence that is wholly different from His character (SW January 29, 1903).
- 11. Easy living after death.** Why is it so hard to lead a self-denying, humble life? Because professed Christians are not dead to the world. It is easy living after we are dead (Messages to Young People 127 Testimony for the Church January 6, 1863).
- 12. No Christianity without death.** Self is prominent. When self is crucified, then this sensitiveness, or pride, will die; until then you are not a Christian (2T 572).



- 13. Surrender of the will.** It is necessary that the will should be sanctified. In surrendering the will, the root of the matter is reached. When the will is surrendered, the streams that flow from the fountain will not be bitter, but will be as pure as crystal. The flowers and fruit of Christian life will bloom and ripen to perfection (ST, October 29, 1894).
- 14. Dead people cannot feel.** You have repeatedly said: "I can't keep my temper." "I have to speak." You lack a meek, humble spirit. Self is all alive, and you stand guard continually to preserve it from mortification or insult. Says the apostle: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Those who are dead to self will not feel so readily and will not be prepared to resist everything which may irritate. Dead men cannot feel. You are not dead. If you were, and your life were hid in Christ, a thousand things which you now notice, and which afflict you, would be passed by as unworthy of notice; you would then be grasping the eternal and would be above the petty trials of this life (2T 425).
- 15. Death through suffering.** We are forming characters for heaven. No character can be complete without trial and suffering. We must be tested, we must be tried. Christ bore the test of character in our behalf that we might bear this test in our own behalf through the divine strength He has brought to us. Christ is our example in patience, in forbearance, in meekness and lowliness of mind. He was at variance and at war with the whole ungodly world, yet He did not give way to passion and violence manifested in words and actions, although receiving shameful abuse in return for good works. He was afflicted, He was rejected and despitefully treated, yet He retaliated not. He possessed self-control, dignity, and majesty. He suffered with calmness and for abuse gave only compassion, pity, and love (3MR 427).
- 16. Death and God's discipline.** "As many as I love," God says, "I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent," In order that we may die to self, we are called upon to endure trial, and when the chastening hand of the Lord is laid upon us, we are not to fret and complain, not to rebel, not to worry ourselves out of the hand of Christ. We are to humble ourselves before God, pleading with him to give us rest and peace. We enter the furnace of affliction with our hearts darkened by selfishness; but if patient under the crucial test, we shall come forth reflecting the divine image, as gold tried in the fire (ST, December 10, 1896).
- 17. Death and trials.** The Lord permits trials to come to us in order that we may be cleansed from earthliness, from selfishness, from sharp, unchristlike traits of character; that we may be led to look to him as the source of all strength. He suffers the deep waves of affliction to pass over our souls in order that we may have deep heart-longings to be cleansed from all defilement, and come forth from the trial purer and holier, with a deeper knowledge of him (ST, December 10, 1896 par. 8).
- 18. Death—the greatest battle.** The Christian life is a battle and a march. But the victory to be gained is not won by human power. The field of conflict is the domain of the heart. The battle which we have to fight--the greatest battle that was ever fought by man--is the surrender of self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love. The old nature, born of blood and of the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up (MB 141.2).
- 19. Without dying we are helpless.** He who determines to enter the spiritual kingdom will find that all the powers and passions of an unregenerate nature, backed by the forces of the kingdom of darkness, are arrayed against him. Selfishness and pride will make a stand against anything that would show them to be sinful. We cannot, of ourselves, conquer the evil desires and habits that strive for the mastery. We cannot overcome the mighty foe who holds us in His thrall. God alone can give us the victory. He desires us to have the mastery over ourselves, our own will and ways. But He cannot work in us without our consent and co-operation. The divine Spirit works through the faculties and powers given to man. Our energies are required to co-operate with God (MB 141.3).
- 20. Voluntary death.** The victory is not won without much earnest prayer, without the humbling of self at every step. Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. The stronghold of Satan would not be broken. The will must be placed on the side of God's will. You are not able, of yourself, to bring your purposes and desires and inclinations into submission to the will of God; but if you are "willing to be made willing," God will accomplish the work for you, even "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5.



Then you will “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Philippians 2:12, 13 (MB 142).

- 21. Death now!** You need not be worried. You need not be thinking that there is a special time coming when you are to be crucified. The time to be crucified is just now. Every day, every hour, self is to die; self is to be crucified; and then, when the time comes that the test shall come to God’s people in earnest, the everlasting arms are around you. The angels of God make a wall of fire around about and deliver you (UL 283).

- 22. Death as preparation for the second coming.** In a view given June 27, 1850, my accompanying angel said, “Time is almost finished. Do you reflect the lovely image of Jesus as you should?” Then I was pointed to the earth and saw that there would have to be a getting ready among those who have of late embraced the third angel’s message. Said the angel, “Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye will have to die a greater death to the world than ye have ever yet died.” I saw that there was a great work to do for them and but little time in which to do it (EW 64).



SESSION 8

baptism of the Holy Spirit

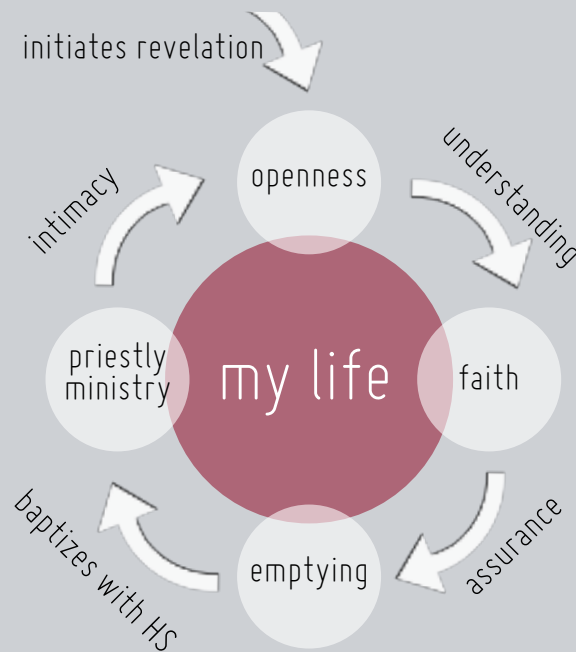


SESSION 8

baptism of the Holy Spirit—the consequence of dying to self



did you know...



God has all the power to change our lives, but that does not
necessarily mean that we will change
—do you know why?





mission briefing

1. At the beginning of the tabernacle and temple services, where did the fire that was used for the sanctuary services come from (Leviticus 9:24; 2 Chronicles 7:1)?

There is an important principle to understand. Divine fire fell from heaven because a sacrifice was waiting. If a sacrifice had not been placed on the altar, God would not have sent any fire because the fire needed a sacrifice to consume.

God repeated to His priests that the fire “must not go out” (Leviticus 6:8-9, 12-13). This was because the fire was divine fire and only holy fire could be used in the holy sanctuary. But how was this divine fire to be kept burning? While the priests could use branches of wood, it was really the continual placing of sacrifices on the altar that kept the fire alight. Without continual sacrifice, the divine fire would die.

2. Read Matthew 3:16. When does the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus?

Baptism symbolizes death to the old life. When someone is baptized, they go completely under the water to show that their old life has been put in the grave. However, they then rise to a new life. This is a life that is empowered by the Holy Spirit. It is after Jesus has come up from the watery grave of the Jordan river that the divine fire of the Holy Spirit came down out of heaven.

Later, Paul used the language of the sanctuary services when he urged His readers to offer themselves as “living sacrifices” (Romans 12:1). He also uses similar sanctuary language that echos God’s instruction to the priests that the fire should not go out. He counsels Timothy to “fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you” (2 Timothy 1:6), and urges, “do not quench the Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

Becoming a sacrifice and receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit are two sides of the same coin. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a consequence of becoming a sacrifice. As Jesus says that a disciple must go to death daily (Luke 9:23), so being baptized by the Holy Spirit happens afresh each day. In this way, Ambassadors serve with divine power, not merely by their own efforts.





thinking it through

1. How have you been living recently—with divine power, or more by your own efforts? What do you need to do to live with greater power from heaven?

2. What do you think of the following quotation? “What we need is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Without this, we are no more fitted to go forth to the world than were the disciples after the crucifixion of their Lord” (1 *Selected Messages*, 411).



reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

Write your personal reflections on the Bible texts and quotations of the baptism of the Holy Spirit below.

the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Bible & writings of Ellen White

- 1. Jesus as an example of death to self and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.** As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-17).
- 2. The baptism of the Holy Spirit after prayer.** They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers... All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 1:14; 2:4).
- 3. The baptism of the Holy Spirit for service.** Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts (Exodus 31:1-5).
- 4. The baptism of the Holy Spirit to proclaim Jesus.** Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is "'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.' Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:8-12).
- 5. The baptism of the Holy Spirit and joy in the middle of problems.** The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit (Acts 14:49-52).
- 6. The baptism of the Holy Spirit leads to joy.** The Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:15-20).
- 7. The baptism of the Holy Spirit comes from Jesus.** I baptise you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8).
- 8. The baptism of the Holy Spirit enables unity in diversity.** For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many (1 Corinthians 12:13-14).
- 9. The baptism of the Holy Spirit enables obedience.** I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws (Ezekiel 36:26-27).
- 10. Preparation for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.** When the heart is emptied of self, it will be ready for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and then you will be fitted to strengthen the sheep and lambs of the flock of Christ; for self will be hid with Christ in God (ST, August 1, 1892).
- 11. Jesus received a daily baptism of the Holy Spirit.** From hours spent with God He came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened Him from His slumbers, and His soul and His lips were anointed with grace, that He might impart to others (RH Aug. 11, 1910).
- 12. Counsel to parents for teaching their children about the baptism of the Holy Spirit.** Teach your children that it is their privilege to receive every day the baptism of the Holy Spirit... By prayer you may gain an experience that will make your ministry for your children a perfect success (CT 131).
- 13. Necessity of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.** What we need is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Without this, we are no more



fitted to go forth to the world than were the disciples after the crucifixion of their Lord. Jesus knew their destitution, and told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endowed with power from on high (1 Selected Messages, 411).

14. **Our need for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.** O how we need the divine Presence! For the baptism of the Holy Spirit, every worker should be breathing out His prayers to God. Companies should be gathered together to call upon God for special help, for heavenly wisdom, that the people of God may know how to plan and devise and execute the work. Especially should men pray that the Lord will choose His agents, and baptize His missionaries with the Holy Spirit. For ten days the disciples prayed before the Pentecostal blessing prayed before the Pentecostal blessing came. It needed all that time to bring them to an understanding of what it meant to offer effectual prayer, drawing nearer and nearer to God, confessing their sins, humbling their hearts before God, and by faith beholding Jesus, and becoming changed into His image. When the blessing did come, it filled all the place where they were assembled; and endowed with power, they went forth to do effectual work for the Master (HM, November 1, 1893 par. 2).
15. **Baptized by the Holy Spirit and sharing with friends.** The atmosphere of the church is so frigid, its spirit is of such an order, that men and women cannot sustain or endure the example of primitive and heaven-born piety. The warmth of their first love is frozen up, and unless they are watered over by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, their candlestick will be removed out of its place, except they repent and do their first works. The first works of the church were seen when the believers sought out friends, relatives, and acquaintances, and with hearts overflowing with love, told the story of what Jesus was to them and what they were to Jesus (TM 167).
16. **Baptism of the Holy Spirit leads to humility.** The baptism of the Holy Spirit will dispel human imaginings, will break down self-erected barriers, and will cause to cease the feeling that "I am holier than thou." There will be a humble spirit with all, more faith and love; self will not be exalted. . . . Christ's spirit, Christ's example, will be exemplified in His people. We shall follow more closely the ways and works of Jesus. . . . The love of Jesus will pervade our hearts (TMK 114).
17. **The baptism of the Holy Spirit leads to revival.** The baptism of the Holy Ghost as on the day of Pentecost will lead to a revival of true religion and to the performance of many wonderful works. Heavenly intelligences will come among us, and men will speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Spirit of God. But should the Lord work upon men as He did on and after the day of Pentecost, many who now claim to believe the truth would know so very little of the operation of the Holy Spirit that they would cry, "Beware of fanaticism." They would say of those who were filled with the Spirit, "These men are full of new wine" (CT, 371.4).
18. **A deeper longing for God and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.** The time is not far off now when men will want a much closer relation to Christ, a much closer union with His Holy Spirit, than ever they have had, or will have, unless they give up their will and their way, and submit to God's will and God's way. The great sin of those who profess to be Christians is that they do not open the heart to receive the Holy Spirit. When souls long after Christ, and seek to become one with Him, then those who are content with the form of godliness, exclaim "Be careful, do not go to extremes." When the angels of heaven come among us, and work through human agents, there will be solid, substantial conversions, after the order of the conversions after the day of Pentecost (2SM 57.2).
19. **Baptism of the Holy Spirit and a knowledge of the truth.** An intellectual knowledge of the truth is not enough; we must know its power upon our own hearts and lives. Ministers need to come to Christ as little children. Seek Jesus, brethren, confess your sins, plead with God day and night, until you know that for Christ's sake you are pardoned and accepted. Then will you love much because you have been forgiven much. Then you can point others to Christ as a sin-pardoning Redeemer. Then you can present the truth from the fullness of a heart that feels its sanctifying power. I fear for you, my brethren. I counsel you to tarry at Jerusalem, as did the early disciples, until, like them, you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Never feel at liberty to go into the desk until you have by faith grasped the arm of your strength (5T 159).
20. **Longing for a fresh baptism of the Spirit.** Oh, that we might be children of God! Oh, that we might every one be humble sons and daughters of God! Oh, that we might have another touch of the Holy Spirit, and every heart be moved before we leave this house. Oh, that we might have a baptism of the Holy Ghost before we separate. Oh, that the love of Jesus might gladden our hearts with sweet music like a song of heaven, because the wickedness of our hearts is broken down and it may be truly said, "See how these brethren love one another" (2 SAT 15).



21. False baptism of the Spirit. Some of these have much to say upon the gifts and are often especially exercised. They give themselves up to wild, excitable feelings and make unintelligible sounds which they call the gift of tongues, and a certain class seem to be charmed with these strange manifestations. A strange spirit rules with this class, which would bear down and run over anyone who would reprove them. God's Spirit is not in the work and does not attend such workmen. They have another spirit (1T 414).

22. Fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit leads to witness. The very first impulse of the renewed heart is to bring others also to the Savior. Those who do not possess this desire give evidence that they have lost their first love; they should closely examine their own hearts in the light of God's Word, and earnestly seek a fresh baptism of the Spirit of Christ; they should pray for a deeper comprehension of that wondrous love which Jesus manifested for us in leaving the realms of glory and coming to a fallen world to save the perishing (Welfare Ministry, 55).



SESSION 9

reflecting Jesus



SESSION 9

reflecting Jesus—the consequence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit



did you know...

Living as a Christian is like a switch connecting the electricity to a light bulb. If you want light, the switch has to be on. If someone turns the switch off, the light bulb instantly has no power and the room is plunged into darkness. The switch must connect the power supply to the light bulb at all times if the bulb is to give light.

Jesus says that He is the vine and we are branches attached to Him (John 15). When we are connected, the sap—His nature—is able to flow from Him into us. Then we will automatically bear fruit because His own nature—His character—is now inside us through the presence of His Spirit (Galatians 5:22-24). But we have to be connected at all times, because the moment we are disconnected from Him, we are disconnected from His nature. When this happens, we are exposed to the temptation of trying to live like Christians, but without divine power!

**effective ministry is always a consequence
of connection to Jesus**





mission briefing

When we become “living sacrifices” (Romans 12:1) and God fills us with Himself through His Spirit, our hearts naturally reflect who God is and what God does. But what is God doing?

God’s priorities for His kingdom are highlighted in the morning and evening services of the Sanctuary. Every day, three offerings were tended by the priests in the Holy Place—the offering of bread, symbolizing God’s words, light that symbolized God’s character, and incense that symbolized God’s intercession.

It is critical to notice that if the sacrifices stopped, the holy fire would die out. If the holy fire died, the priests would not be able to continue their daily ministry in the Holy Place because the three offerings required holy fire. Only holy fire could be used in the Holy Place.

The daily work of the priests in the Holy Place represents the continual work of Christ on our behalf. Jesus became a sacrifice and was filled with the divine fire of the Holy Spirit. His ministry highlighted the three priorities of the Holy Place because He is the light of the world (John 8:12), the bread of life (John 6:51), and our intercessor (Hebrews 7:25).

1. Read 1 Peter 2:9, Matthew 5:14, Acts 4:31, and Ephesians 6:18. Why do you think reflecting the light of God’s character, preaching His words, and interceding for others all need to be consequences of a daily death and baptism of the Holy Spirit?

As holy fire was needed for the priests every day to tend the three sacrifices, so the holy fire of the Holy Spirit is needed by us every day so we can be the light of the world, hold out the word of God to others, and intercede for them. We can try and do these things in our own strength, but the results will be insignificant. Only when we reflect Christ by becoming living sacrifices and being baptized daily with the fire of His Holy Spirit can God accomplish holy work through us.





thinking it through

1. We reflect Jesus by who we are and what we do. Which one of these is most important to you? Explain your answer.

2. How often have you tried to work for God in your own strength? What can you do to ensure you are continually operating with divine fire?



reflecting Jesus & His kingdom

my ministry priorities

Think about how you may or may not be ministering to others at the moment. How can the three ministry priorities of the Sanctuary help to shape and balance how you minister to others in the future?

intercession (prayer)

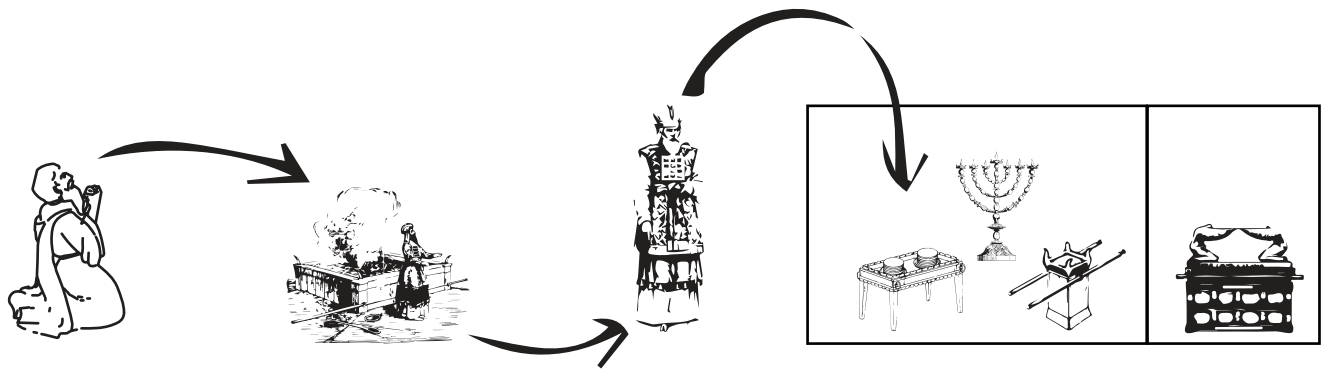


sharing God's words

revealing Christ-likeness



1. the process of re-formation: the morning and evening services



PREREQUISITE 1:
OPENNESS

SACRIFICE
Christ's Death: John 1:29
My Death: Rom. 12:1

PRIESTLY MINISTRY
Jesus is a priest: Hebrews 4:14
I am a priest: 1 Peter 2:9

BREAD
Christ is the Word: John 6:51
I am to share the Word: Philippians 2:16

PREREQUISITE 2: FAITH

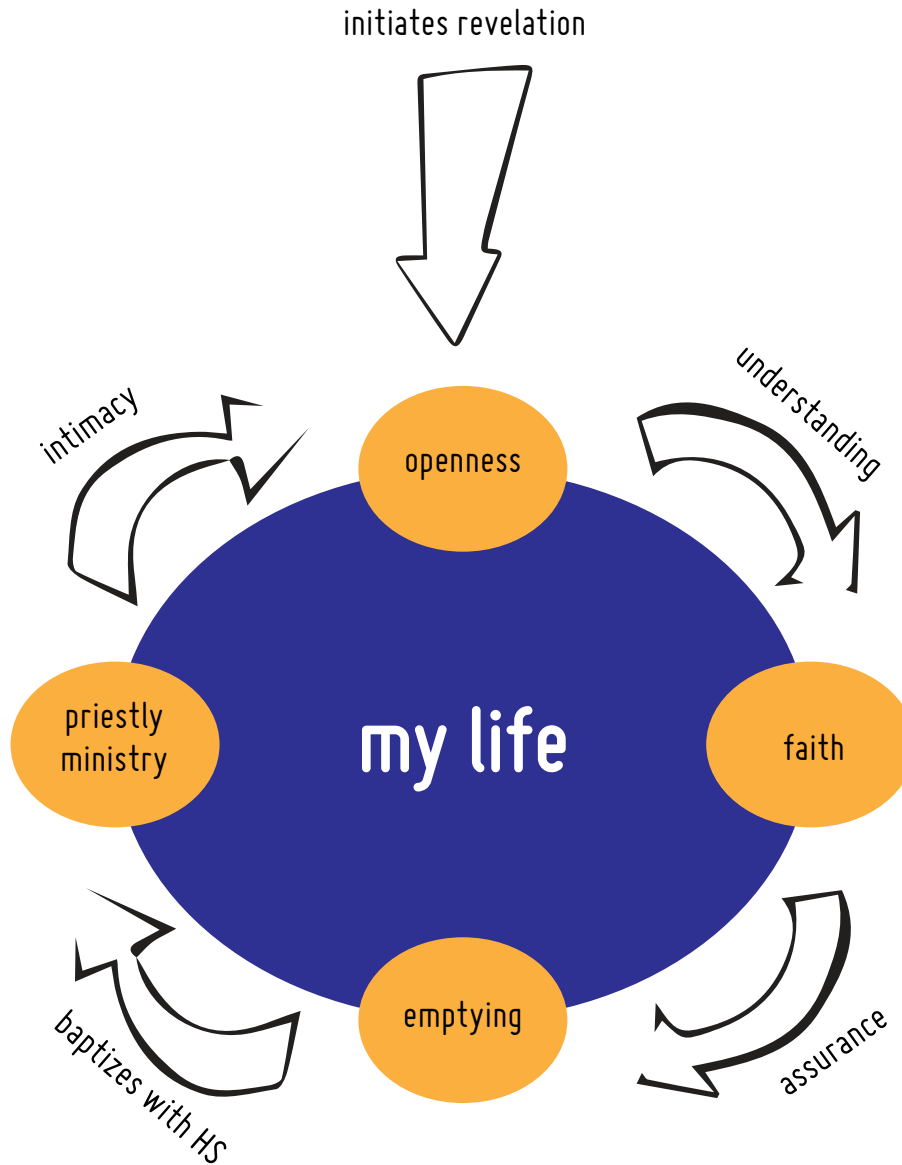
FIRE
Jesus filled with Holy Spirit: Luke 4:1, 18
I am to be filled with Holy Spirit: Ephesians 5:18

LIGHT
Christ is the light: John 8:12
I am to reveal the light: Matthew 5:14

INCENSE
Christ intercedes for others: Hebrews 7:25
I intercede for others: James 5:16

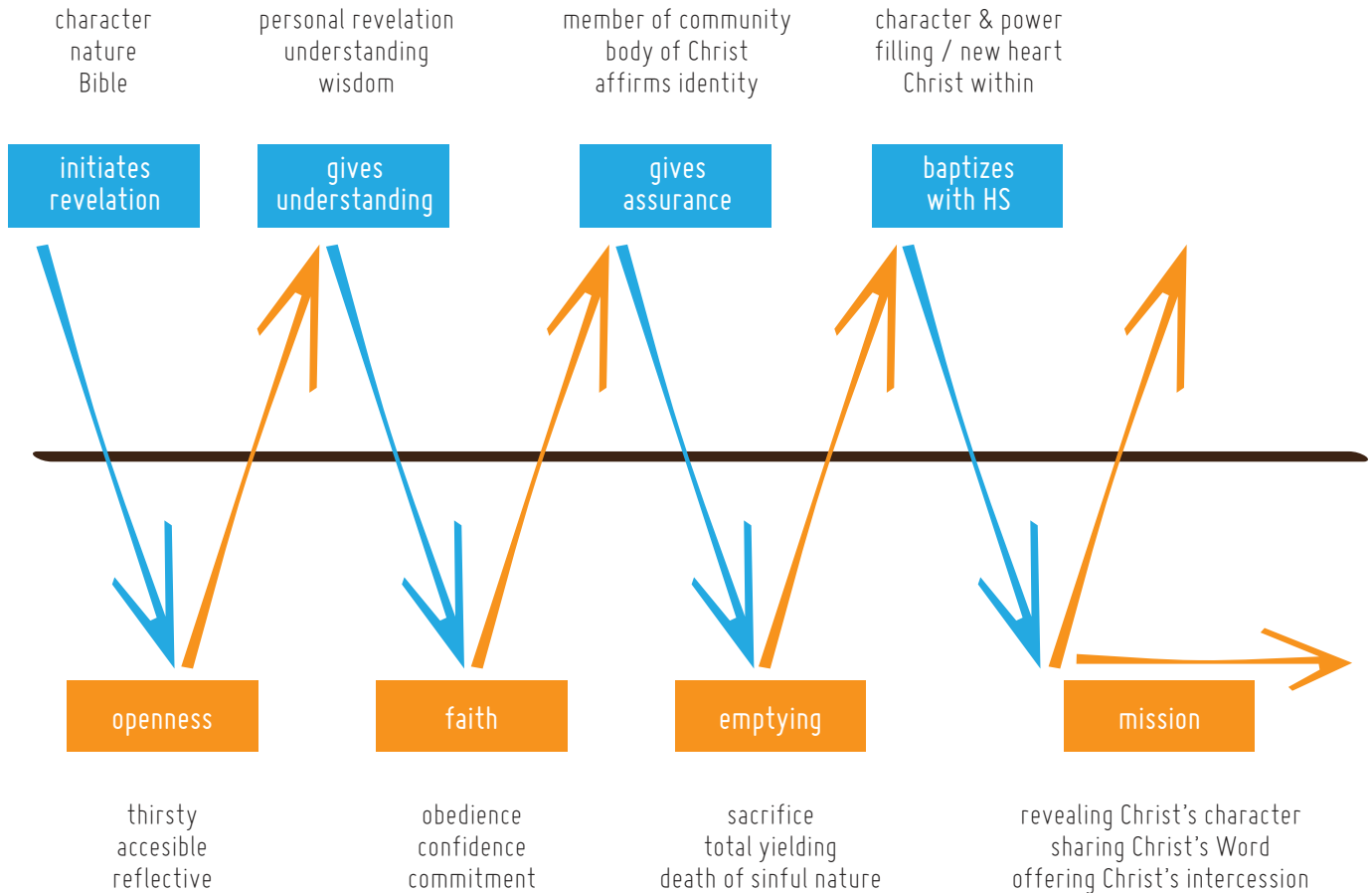


2. the process of re-formation



3. the process of re-formation: God's role & ours

God

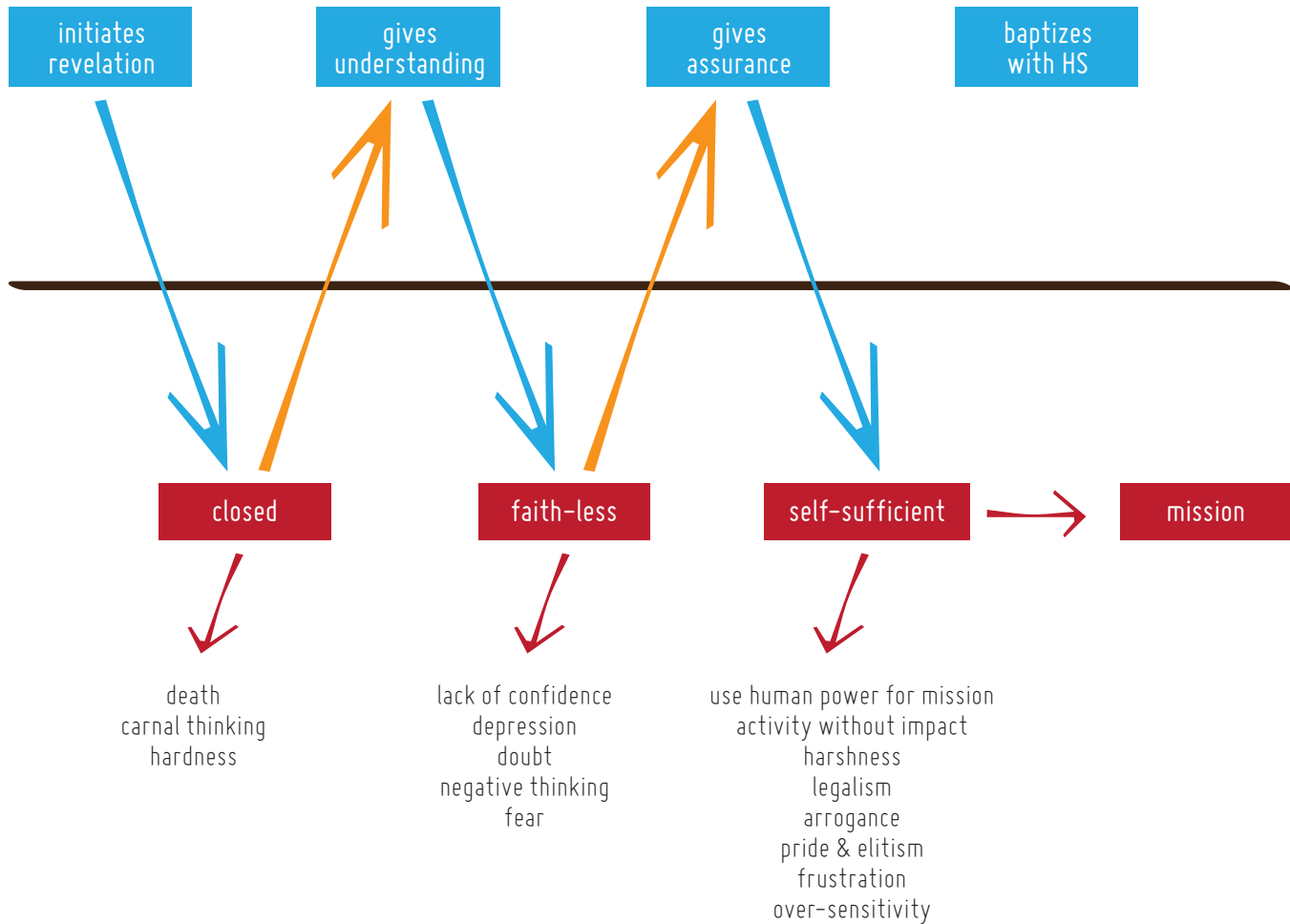


man



4. the process of re-formation: what happens when the process stops

God

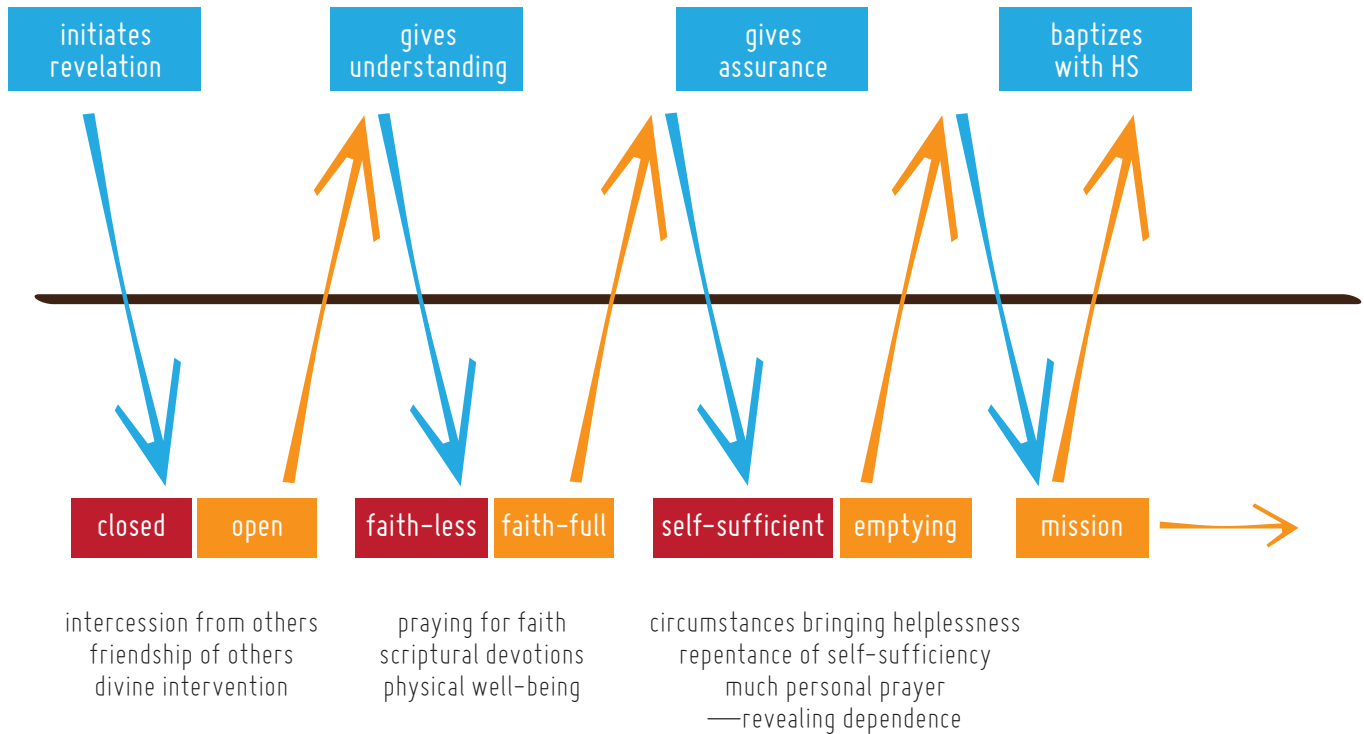


man



5. the process of re-formation: how to remove the blockages

God



man





My Journal: discipleship

Session 1

I am called to be an ambassador for another world

Session 2

I am on an eternal journey to reflect Jesus

Session 3

an ambassador is designed to grow in community

Session 4

an ambassador's role is to honor Jesus

Session 5

openness

Session 6

faith

Session 7

dying to self

Session 8

baptism of the Holy Spirit

Session 9

reflecting Jesus

date

leader's signature

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AMBASSADORS



Individual Discipleship Plan (IDP)

1. IDP Module Name:
2. Spiritual Companion:
3. Personal vision statement:
4. Expected evidence of change:
5. Next steps:
6. Reflection:



community service project planning module 1: DISCIPLESHIP

Our Ambassador group will become involved in serving the community during this module. We will discuss the basis of the project and think about ideas for a community project or organization in which our group can serve bi-weekly or once a month.

Reflections:



AS THE FATHER HAS SENT ME, SO I AM SENDING YOU
AMBASSADORS