

3/28/16

Wk 4 Constant Communion / Circle Illustration :
The Experience of the Old Self and the New Self

God Lives in You

Look at these verses: What do you learn about the Father, the Son and the Spirit?

John 14:15-31

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?” Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

“These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.

Do you see how each member of the Trinity now lives in you? This is true as you walk every day!

Ephesians 1:13

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Hebrews 13:5

I will never leave you nor forsake you.

Everywhere you go, no matter what happens to you, no matter what you are thinking/saying, no matter what someone says to you...God is with you, every member of the Trinity! If you're a true believer, there is never a time that Jesus is not with you. Jesus really is Immanuel, God with us. The Spirit lives in you. The Father and Son make their home in you. Oh how I want to walk in step with God as Jesus did and not grieve the Holy Spirit.

Our little one said: Jesus is with me! He no bye bye!

God used him to speak prophetically about a truth that is quite profound. Not only is God always with us, but once He starts living in you, He will never leave, on into eternity.

Unbroken Union, into Eternity

Even in the book of Revelation, the story of mankind ends with man being the dwelling place of God in all fullness!

Revelation 21:1-4

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

He is and will be with you faithfully, on into eternity. You can count on and even take healthy, spiritually-led risks of obedience based on this truth.

If you face a crushing disappointment, great harm or difficulties, you don't have to face it alone. Think of Jacob H. He has sensed the Presence of God as he has faced the new news of cancer over the past week. How beautiful that he would lean into the God who is right there with Him!!

One fact you can count on about this Union with God is that this will always remain true. It will never end or be broken. Jesus said, in this world you will have trouble. But think of this: You will never face the disappointment or trouble because God has abandoned you. If our experience is that He is not with us, there are several possible reasons:

- 1) we are not true believers and still are only our Old Self
- 2) sin is blocking your fellowship and there is something to repent of—ask the Holy Spirit what it is
- 3) we don't know that God promised to forever abide in you
- 4) we know it, but we haven't taken it to heart
- 5) we don't believe it to be true

When we feel alone and separate from God, if we are true believers, it is His will for you to know His Presence. This feeling is not from Him, but because of us. We leave Him and He is calling us back.

Right Here - song

Seek God When Experience Betrays Truth

Sometimes we cannot see what is real and true, because our perception is clouded.

How do you change this?

Humble yourself and pray, asking for His eyes, His perspective. In order to see spiritual things, it is only the Holy Spirit Who can give us that kind of understanding.

1 Corinthians 2:11-14

For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

How does this describe the natural man and the spiritual man?

This passage describes God's Spirit alone as knowing the thoughts of God. We have received this very Person of God, the Spirit of God, into our lives. He wants to lead us to understand the things the Father has freely given to us. If you operate out of your Old Self, you won't understand the things of God. The Spirit of God only teaches a person who is yielded to the Spirit; He will teach you how to understand things about Him, how to interpret and evaluate spiritual things, how to have spiritual discernment.

Humility is that place where we live with a holy desperation, where we seek God alone to meet us in our deepest place of need. God responds to our prayers of humility.

It hit me this morning how on the Cross, Jesus said, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" I thought, "Whoa! Here we are, learning about how God will never leave or forsake us and Jesus WAS forsaken by God!" He had never known separation from God. But because He loved us, He was willing to make that Great Exchange. I sensed it was the Spirit Who quickened this truth to me and opened my eyes to see this. This was God's voice at work in my heart this morning. We'll talk about this next week.

Circle Illustration

We've studied the gospel.

We've studied how He wants us to have an intimate relationship with us as our Husband.

We've studied how our Old Self is dead now.

We've studied how we are new creations, our New Self was created by an act of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, with the seed of the Word.

We've studied how we grow in faith as we yield to His Word and the Holy Spirit.

When we believe and obey in faith, we then can experience knowing God. We start looking like His Son. We move one step closer each time we obey in faith; we begin to fulfill His purposes in creating mankind.

Now we need rearrange the Old Self and New Self imagery on the white board from last week.

(Draw a wide circle and another circle on the outside of it, with about a cm gap between circles.)

(Write GOD in the middle of the large circle)

The Old Self is on the outside of this Circle. There is a deathly drop between these two circles, a chasm if you can imagine this in 3D. This pictures the death and God solution of execution which we learned about last week.

The New Self is on the inside. WHOLENESS in Him is what God is working out in each of us from our salvation to seeing Him face to face. One day, when we see Him, we will be like Him. Jesus enjoyed living in Constant Communion with His Father!

Ever seen a Sci-fi show where they have a medical healing tool? They wave the tool over the broken bone, and it is instantaneously healed! Ever been in one of those revolving doors which you find in some buildings? You enter the opening, push the door as you walk in the circular path and then you are magically in the building. Now, combine these images: Imagine entering through a healing Sci-fi door. As you enter, all the dirt and sludge of the world, plus your sins and fleshly desires fall off of you as you walk through this circular doorway path. Once you enter into the building you are completely made whole, new, healed, full of life. Jesus is this door. The Holy Spirit empowers you and God the Father is the goal.

Let's brainstorm words that describe the experience of the Old Self. — things we do and things done to us that are not God's will or of God. (take time to brainstorm)

Now let's do the same for the New Self. (take time)

The inner circle is the Wide Place God wants us to live from every day. It is an Eternal Place, the Presence of God Himself. It is out of our relationship with God that He wants us to live. (That's why my blog is called An Eternal Place b/c that is where I want to live out of.)

As His child, we have an inheritance. Think of a fairytale princess in the realm of her father, the King. All that is His is hers.

Jesus is the King. You are that princess. All that is His is yours. But this is not a fairytale. This is truly what He has done for you. Since God lives in His children, you carry His Presence wherever you go and have access to Him and all of His inheritance for you.

Let's see this on a practical level. Might there be someone who really matters to you, from whom you want to hear affirmation, acceptance or value? Do you get hurt if they don't give you these things or give them to others? This is common to mankind. This is called insecurity. You are still living out of your Old Self. This is NOT where God wants you to live. And really, this, and all these things outside of the circle, are idols. Why are they idols? Because these things are not God, yet we serve them. They are harsh masters that don't give us what we need. We worship them over what God thinks and what He wants for us.

I used to be quite insecure, I looked for people to define me. I found that I looked to the praises and affirmations of people to define me. Praises build me up in an unhealthy, insecure way; criticisms hurt bitterly. I know that in the Bible that it is good to affirm people, and it is bad to be critical, but my insecurity was apparent because praise boosted me too much and negative evaluations hurt too much. In a future week, we will talk about how God freed me from the bondage of insecurity. Really, He spoke life to me in just the area I needed to hear that brought healing.

Do you want someone's approval to define your sense of self? (write acceptance v approval) e.g. I didn't have parents that communicated their love for me in ways I could receive it. I wanted them to use words. Instead they gave their lives by working tooth and nail for the food, clothing and shelter which I enjoyed. They paid for my education. These were the ways they communicated love. I don't remember my Dad telling me he loved me until I was an adult in my twenties, because saying the words were cheap, in his mind. He told me that it was contrary to Korean culture. He'd rather show it by providing for me. Growing up in an American society, though, this left me feeling really insecure as a child. I found that as an adult, I wanted the approval, the friendship, the recognition of a particular guy. But this guy withheld communicating much of what I wanted from him. I don't know why as people we zero in on certain people and want their approval. How interesting now to look back and see that I gave the privilege of defining me to a person I rarely contact today! Why is this broken and messed up? He's merely a human, broken with needs of his own! Only God is supposed to fill these voids in our hearts and define us!!

Now let's write words on our board from these passages: (homework, passages from Eph 4 - 2 Tim 2)

Ephesians 4:17-32

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ! — assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the

spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Colossians 1:9-14

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 3:5-17

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Matthew 5:2-16 - The Beatitudes

And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

2 Timothy 2:22-26

So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

(write grace v performance)

The world's pattern is to perform for position, approval, acceptance, recognition, security, value, importance. God's pattern is grace. Christ performed for us, perfectly living out righteousness, the Law. We failed and so He gave us what He earned, the credit of His righteousness and took the penalty of our sin. We live by grace, not performance.

Let's speak on more practical terms: what words can you add to either the inside or the outside of the circle based on what you see around you, whether in your life or in the lives of others? (without using names!)

If you live on the outside, how do you get on the inside?

- 1) Know that God's will is for you to be on the inside.
- 2) Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He has paid the way for you to cross over by the sacrifice of His life. Imagine the 3D chasm. He is the Bridge across this chasm. He laid down His life. He is that revolving door of healing. One day you will see Him face to face. Look to Him as your example for living. As you seek and yield to Him on this side of heaven, you will begin to see Him more clearly and in turn He will do His transformative work in you.
- 3) As you meditate on God's Word, your belief in truth will grow. Believe truth!

- 4) Begin thanking God for what is true, meditate on what is true and it will impact your perspective.
- 5) Live for Him and not the opinions or approval of others. Care more about what God thinks about you than what others think. Who does God say I am?

Max Lucado's You Are Special - if you know this story, let the Spirit speak new things to you as you apply this to your life on a spiritual level.

How does this story apply to your life? Think about your days at school or home? Who are you in this story? How do you go from being that person to Lucia?

Amy was my Lucia. She had a walk with God that was different. She was led by the Spirit. She knew intimacy with God; light oozed out of her pores! People felt loved by her. She had rare joy. I wanted to know her secret, so I asked her to pray with me daily while she was there in Japan for a short trip. I started to see God as she saw Him and it has made all the difference in my walk with God.

Here's where the rubber meets the road. I struggled with my Old Self right after teaching about it last week! Last week, we covered a LOT of material with the Old Self and the New Self. I loved these messages so much, but I had never processed through them to teach them. And then I ran out of time to edit through it. I had so much on my plate that week and so just going through those 5 messages in preparation for our study took all the time I had, right up to the start of the meeting. After having taught it to you guys, I could see where I could have edited it if I had more time. But I had to be content with how I presented it to you, raw, rushed and full. I had to choose to live by grace and not performance. I did my best. God used the material in me, even that weekend, because I got to share it with a guy who was wrestling with violent and demonic thoughts, to help him to see where they were rooted and how to combat them. Now that I've gone through teaching it twice, it is in me SO much better. I wish I had more time to have taught it more smoothly, less rushed, more from my heart, but in reality, I struggle with having enough time to homeschool and lead this study! So really, there was no other option!

Anyways, right after the study, here was the battle. I felt that I needed to call B to apologize and excuse myself for not being perfect in my presentation! My desire was motivated by fear and the desire for human approval. Doesn't this smell of the world and the Old Self? I felt I didn't meet B's approval and I wanted it. I was in a spiritual battle and I had to combat these thoughts with truth. I had to choose to live in the Spirit, fight my flesh and remember that it is dead. I had to see where these feelings were rooted and how they were leading me toward death. I had to remind myself that I have been recreated anew, that I don't live for her approval nor yours. I live for God's and He has already made me accepted in the Beloved and we are all in process, moving toward His perfecting us in glory! To have given in to my Old Self would have been choosing to live in insecurity. It's funny, it is not until a week later, that I saw really clearly that my struggle was with my Old Self! Now it is plain as day!

Song - Unveiled - done

Here's my suggestion as you have quiet times or free time this week to meditate on this:

1. Take a blank sheet of paper (want to make it large for your wall? or on regular sized paper with small enough writing to be able to keep adding to this illustration) and write out the Circle Illustration in your own handwriting from the pictures. Write neatly and in a way that you will have room to add to this illustration as God shows you more words to include as the weeks go by. Make a list of what we wrote on the board and put it in alphabetical order.
2. Read the verses that we didn't cover last night, which we discussed could be used for homework (for your edification, nothing I'm going to check you on or ask you about). It's the ones from Eph 4 to 2 Tim 2 in the notes.
3. As you read, on a separate sheet of paper, write Old Self and New Self in two columns and add any new words in these columns that you discover from your reading of Scripture. This can include words that are from other Scripture passages. Anything the Spirit gives you! Maybe from observations as you live life!
4. Alphabetize your list of new words and compare it with the list of previously brainstormed words. Add any new words to your illustration. This paper is for you to continue to expand as you live life and as you are in other passages of Scriptures.

Through this exercise, God will be training you to have greater spiritual discernment in your own life and in the world around you, to discern between evil and good, making more clear the distinction between the Old Self and the New Self.

Questions to talk over with the Lord:

Since God says He lives inside all who believe in Him, from our illustration of the Circle of God's Presence, what do you want to experience more consistently on a daily, moment-to-moment basis?

What circumstances hinder this experience of God for you?

What do you experience instead? What areas do you live outside of the circle?

From today, what might help you to stay in the circle of His Presence?

Let's remember that this week. (write on a card)

Keep living inside the circle. Jesus gave His life to make this YOURS!