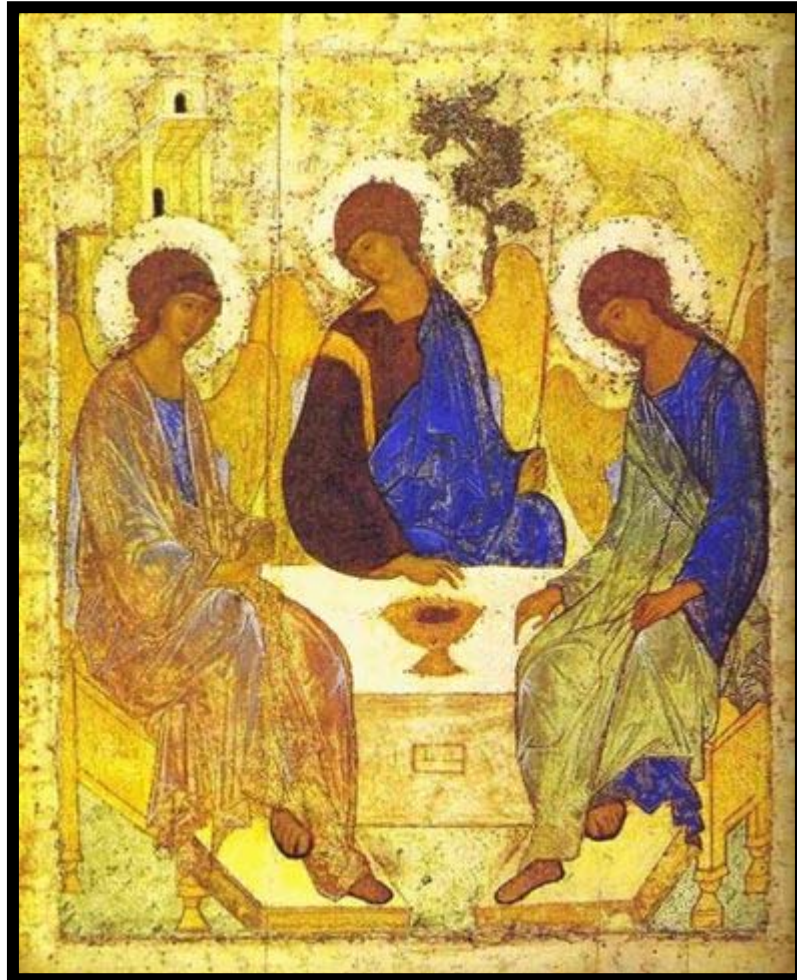


**Cultivating a God-generated Life:
Being embedded with Christ in the Father
through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit**



A Learning Experience

Dick Moes

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To the members
of
the Surrey Covenant Reformed Church

“I was hungry and you gave me something to eat,
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,
. . . I needed clothes and you clothed me”
(Mt. 25:35-36).

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INTRODUCTION

Sometime during the past five-year period, a transition took place in my life. I began to understand and experience in a way I had never understood and experienced before what Jesus meant when He said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). In addition, texts like, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20), “For you have died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3), “To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27) and “But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:17) took on new meaning for me. Moreover, I noticed that the more I intentionally lived embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit by being receptive to God’s love in Christ, the more He was working out his life in and through me. The fruit of the Spirit began to manifest themselves in my life as never before. My relationship with my wife and children became more Christlike. I focused less on doing and more on being that leads to doing, experiencing a tremendous rest in my soul. I drew the conclusion that I was now living embedded with Christ in the Father in a way that I had never known or experienced before.

Reading through some of the books that have appeared, I noticed that I was not alone in my experience. People like Dallas Willard and Larry Crabb has written about a similar experience.

Three years ago, I enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry Program at ACTS Seminaries in Langley, British Columbia. The program focused on Spiritual Formation and Leadership. This past June, I finished my ninth and last course. What remains is completing a dissertation project. The dissertation is entitled *Cultivating a God-generated Life: Being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit*. As part of this dissertation project, I developed a 10-week learning experience designed to cultivate this God-generated life of living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. One of the requirements for finishing my doctoral program is that I have to field-test this material. I am asking you to help me by being part of this learning experience.

My first research question is: To what extent is or was the spirituality of (young) adults in my congregation and in a neighbouring congregation of a denomination with which our denomination is having merger talks characterized by various forms of detachment between Christ and themselves? My second research question is: To what extent do Reformed Christians live self-generated, dis-embedded lives? My third research question is: Will going through a 10-week spiritual learning experience meant to equip (young) adults to learn to live a God-generated life of living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit serve as a stepping stone to move them from living a self-

generated life of detachment from God in Christ to a God-generated life of living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit?

I thank you for having filled out the first questionnaire to help me answer my first two research questions. I also thank you for your willingness to participate in this ten-week learning experience so that I can answer my third research question. May God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit richly bless us all as we embark on this journey of discovery together.

September 11, 2006

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The Kiss—Gustav Klimt

Lesson 1

**Being Embraced by God's Father-Son Love
through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit**

In Christ Alone

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This Cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My Comforter, my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone, who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save
'Till on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live

There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious Day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
'Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

A. An intimate embrace

Mr. Fact considers the heart of the Christian faith to be about learning to know more about God. He really likes his pastor's preaching because he explains the text sentence by sentence. He spends a lot of time on his own in his Bible with the primary goal of acquiring as much information about God as he can. He prepares well for his weekly Bible study and enthusiastically participates in discussions on the finer points of discovering the meaning of the text. The Christian faith, however, does feel like a distant relationship to Mr. Fact.

Mr. Love considers the heart of the Christian faith to be about living in union with God. He really likes his pastor's preaching because he does not just give factual information about God, but also encourages him to get to know God personally. He spends a lot of time on his own in his Bible with the primary goal of getting to know his God better. He prepares well for his weekly Bible study and enthusiastically participates in discussions that enable the Scripture passage to penetrate more deeply into his being. Consequently, the Christian faith feels like an intimate relationship to Mr. Love.

Reflect

Who do you relate to more: Mr. Fact or Mr. Love? Why?

B. The embrace of a Lover

In the Old Testament, marriage is used to describe the relationship between God and his covenant people. In the New Testament, marriage is used to describe the relationship between Jesus Christ and his covenant people. Let's have a look at a few key passages.

1. *Genesis 2:22-25* and *Exodus 19:4-6*

In Genesis 2:22, we read that God brought the woman He had made out of Adam's rib to the man. In Exodus 19:4, we read that God brought Israel to Himself. This implies that God's relationship with his covenant people is comparable to a marriage relationship (cf. Hos. 2:14-23). As God's intention for Adam and Eve was to be united to one another and become one flesh, so his intention for his people is to be united to Him and become one flesh with Him.

Reflect

What resonance or dissonance do you feel about being married to God? Why do you feel this way? How often do you think about yourself as being married to God? What implications do you suppose not thinking about being married to God very often might have on whether you experience your relationship to God being distant or intimate?

2. *Ephesians 5:22-33*

In Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul sees the marriage relationship between a husband and wife as a model of the church's marriage with Christ.

Reflect

How often do you think of marriage being a model of the church's marriage to Christ? How might daily considering marriage as an image of what it means to be married to Christ impact the way you experience your relationship with God in Christ?

3. The marriage metaphor is a corporate metaphor, for Paul says that he is referring to Christ and the church (Eph. 5:31-32). The same can be said about other metaphors used to depict union with Christ: the union of a building and its foundation (Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-5), the union of the vine and its branches (Jn. 15:1-8), the union between the members and the head of the body (1 Cor. 12:12) and the union between members of a race and the head of the race (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 45).

Reflect

If the church is corporately married to Christ, does this mean that each member of the church is also personally married to Christ? How does the church nurture this marriage?

4. In Jn. 17:26, Jesus prays, “I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” This is an incredible petition Jesus is praying. In essence, He is asking the Father that the same love with which the Father loves the Son would be in us. And the way this love is in us is by Jesus living in us. Thus, when God embraces us in Jesus Christ, we are embraced by the love the Father has for the Son (= God’s Father-Son love). This is why He enters into covenant with his people: He wants to generate his Father-Son love in them by having Jesus live in them through his Holy Spirit. In this way, the trinitarian life of God is present on earth and human beings are able to become partakers of God’s own nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

Reflect

What resonance or dissonance does Jesus’ petition arouse in you? If you contemplate yourself being embraced by God’s Father-Son love, what impact might this have on your experience of your relationship with God? Might you experience this relationship as distant or intimate? Why?

5. In his *Love’s Sacred Order*, Leiva-Merikakis writes:

If you were to ask me what, in my opinion, is the most critical need at present in our manner of educating in faith, I would not in the first place emphasize greater doctrinal formation to greater social involvement. Important as they are, such formation and involvement at bottom cannot stand on their own, for either they flow organically from a common higher source or they quickly degenerate into mere dogmatism and social activism. And the higher source is the Church’s and the individual Christian’s *mystical relationship* to God, as this can subsist only in Jesus Christ as incarnate Word. *From: Leiva-Merikakis, Love’s Sacred Order: The Four Loves Revisited, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000, 17-18.*

Reflect

What resonance or dissonance do you feel with this quotation? Why? If Merikakis is right, what implications would this have for experiencing the Christian faith as an intimate relationship?

C. Enjoying the embrace

1. Recently, my wife and I enjoyed four days at Whistler (home of the 2010 Winter Olympics). Even though we have lived in British Columbia for quite some years, we had never been there. Consequently, we were not able to talk about Whistler from personal experience, but only from what we knew from the Internet, brochures and what friends had told us. Now that we have been there, however, we have a personal acquaintance of what Whistler is about. We now not only know *about* Whistler intellectually, but also *know* Whistler personally.

In the Bible, we find this same distinction between knowing God with our heads and with our hearts. For instance, before God sent Moses to Egypt to deliver God's people, the Egyptians only knew *about* the LORD with their heads (they had long forgotten what He had done for them during Joseph's time), but once they were punished with one plague after another, they personally *knew* the LORD with their hearts (even though they did not submit to Him, e.g., Ex. 5:2; 7:5). In fact, the same was true for the Israelites (e.g., Ex. 10:1-2).

In the New Testament, when Jesus tells his Father that eternal life is knowing the Father and Jesus, then He has this same distinction in mind (Jn. 17:3). Eternal life is not just knowing *about* the Father, but also personally *knowing* the Father and the Son through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

Interestingly, the Old Testament also uses the word for personally knowing God for sexual activity between a husband and wife (e.g., Gen. 4:1). This shows that personally knowing God and Jesus Christ is a very intimate, interactive knowledge.

Reflect

What could be some of the reasons why you have more conceptual knowledge about God and Jesus Christ than relational knowledge of God and Jesus Christ. In other words, why could it be that your knowledge of God and Jesus Christ is more like the knowledge my wife and I had of Whistler before we went there for a holiday than after? How would this hinder you from feeling and enjoying the embrace of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit? How could this hinder God from generating his own life into your life?

2. Approaches to reading Scripture

In *The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible*, we read:

The Bible is all about human life “with God.” It is about how God has made this “with-God” life possible and will bring it to pass. In fact, the name Immanuel, meaning in Hebrew “God is with us,” is the title given to the one and only Redeemer, because it refers to God’s everlasting intent for human life—namely, that we should be in every aspect a dwelling place of God. *Indeed, the unity of the Bible is discovered in the development of life “with God” as a reality on earth, centered in the person of Jesus.* We might call this the *Immanuel Principle* of Life.

From: Richard J. Foster, ed. The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible, New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005, xxvii.

Reflect

When you read the Bible, how often do you intentionally consider that the unity of the Bible is discovered in the development of life “with God” as a reality on earth, centered in the person of Jesus? What implications do you suppose not reading the Bible with this perspective would have on whether you consider your relationship to God being distant or intimate?

In his *Shaped by the Word*, Robert Mulholland compares two approaches to reading the Scriptures. These two approaches can be summed up in the following diagram:

Informational Reading	Formational Reading
a. seeks to cover as much as possible as quickly as possible for the sake of acquiring information	a. is more concerned about the quality of reading than the quantity; you read more for formation than information
b. is linear, moving quickly over the surface of the text from point a to point b, etc	b. seeks to move deeper and deeper into the text allowing the text to intrude into the deeper depths of your being
c. seeks to control and master the text	c. allows the text to control and master you
d. views the text as an object out there for us to control and/or manipulate according to our own purposes, intentions or desires	d. views the text as subject of the reading relationship; we are the object that is shaped by the text; thus, we wait for the text to shape and control us
e. is analytical, critical and judgmental	e. is humble, detached, receptive and loving; we yield and are willingly and pliable before the text.
f. is characterized by a problem-solving mentality	f. is open to mystery

Adapted from: M. Robert Mulholland Jr., Shaped by the Word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation, rev ed. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2000, 55-61.

Reflect

How do you tend to read the Scriptures? What impact does your approach to reading the Scriptures have on experiencing union with God in Christ? Why does an informational approach of the Scriptures tend to foster a conceptual knowledge about God while a formational reading of the Scriptures tends to foster a personal knowledge of God? How could the latter approach to reading the Scriptures be used by God to generate his own love life into your life (Ps. 1:2-3)?

Note: *the goal is not to read either in an informational or a transformational one, but to experience a constant, balanced interplay between the informational and transformational mode of reading.*

3. Encountering God

There are a number of things we can do to foster a formational reading approach to the Scriptures that allows God to enter the inner recesses of our soul with the regenerating seed of his Word so that we increasingly grow closer to Him in with an intimacy that matches that of marriage.

a. *Meditation*

Prayerfully, silently and steadily focus on a small portion of Scripture.

b. *Harmony-Dissonance*

What in the text strikes a note of either harmony or dissonance in you? If harmony, why? If dissonance, why? What does the experience of either harmony or dissonance reveal to you about God, yourself, your relationships?

c. *Imagination*

Imagine yourself being a participant in the narrative. Imagine the things you would be seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling and touching. Once you have recreated the scene in your imagination, begin to examine your thoughts and feelings about the scene. Start putting the words of the text into practice.

d. *“If you were there”*

Part of and yet distinguished in the imaginative process is imagining “if you were there.” If you were there, what would you have done? What would you have said? How would you have reacted? On which side would you have been found? Would you have had the courage to stand up on the unpopular side? Would you have gone along with the crowd? All these and the items mentioned under b and c become part of your meditation.

Adapted from Mulholland, Shaped by the Word, 148-155.

It may be helpful to use **the following guideline for meditation** that incorporates the four elements listed above.

A. Assume a relaxed, receptive body stance. Calm down. Be silent and become aware of the presence of God. In this way, make room for the living Word.

B. Pray the Spirit of the Word to open up eyes, ears, and heart. “Lord, who makes alive, open up in me what is closed. Make me receptive to your voice. Grant that I may meet Christ. He is the Way. He is my Life. Amen.”

C. Read the text aloud and let its sound enter into your consciousness. Read and listen to the words as though they were completely new for you. By repeating the reading a few times become completely conversant with the text, so that the words are starting to resonate in your heart. In this way, get thoroughly acquainted with the words of the text. Keep them with you and cherish them.

D. Envision the words and the imagery of the text. Freely examine their connotations. How do these words affect your personal values and perception? What kind of notions and perceptions does the imagery evoke? Read the story vicariously. Use all your senses: listen, look, taste, feel, and smell. Use all your imaginative power while listening to the text.

E. Prayerfully ask yourself questions. What is the text doing to me? Do I feel opposition in the form of anger, sadness, helplessness or resistance? Is there anything I find particularly striking, something attractive, something that makes me happy? Ask the Lord: Where do You want to touch and change me? What do you want to teach me? How can I more consciously practise the presence of God in Christ?

F. Be prayerfully silent and listen. The Holy Spirit will direct your thoughts and emotions. Surrender to Christ who comes to you in his Word. Find rest in his presence and give praise to the Triune God. Be ready to follow Christ in your daily life.

Adapted from Jos Douma, Op het spoor van meditatie: Biddend luisteren naar Gods Woord Kampen: Kok, 2002, 72.

Reflect

How would using these meditative techniques facilitate learning to embrace Christ and live in intimate union with Him? How could this, in turn, be used by God to generate his own life into yours?

D. Living out of the embrace

1. In his *Shaped by the Word*, Mulholland writes:

After our approach to scripture opens us to encounter with God, we come to the point of response. An encounter with the living Word of God calls for our response. This response should not take place simply at the rational, cognitive, intellectual level. The address by God calls for a response in the daily structures of our being and doing. Our encounter with the Word, our address by God, must be carried into the details of our daily lives.

Mulholland then gives his readers three ways in which the Word can be carried into daily life: reminders, disciplines and journaling.

Reminders

Reminders can be written reminders, memorization, praying the Word and singing the Word.

Spiritual disciplines

“A spiritual discipline is an act of loving obedience offered to God to be used for *God’s* purposes in our lives. *Anything* and *everything* we do can be a spiritual discipline *if* we offer it to God as a means for God to use in our lives if God so chooses. “Doing” becomes “being” when we offer our “doing” to God and keep offering it as a means for God to do whatever God wants to do in and through our lives” (Mulholland, *Shaped by the Word*, 114). Thus, if God is calling you to break a destructive habit, change a damaging attitude or limited perspective, “offer to God the appropriate spiritual discipline of obedience” (160).

Journaling

Journaling is personally reflecting on the impact of the Word of God in and on your life. Mulholland gives the following advice:

As you journal, take particular note of your feelings, attitudes, reactions, and responses to the Word. Analyze your attempts to carry it into your daily life and the disciplines the Word of God has brought into being. Note your victories and failures, your elation and despair, your fulfillment and frustration. Be brutally open and honest with yourself regarding your encounter with and response to the Word of God. . . .

Periodically, perhaps every two weeks or every month, review the entries in your journal. Look for patterns of response to the Word, patterns of feelings, sequences of victories or defeats, relationships between fulfillment and failure. Are these revealing something to you about your encounter with and response to the Word? Are there patterns of resistance to the Word? Are there certain situations in which your response to God is limited or

nonexistent? Are there points where your disciplines are becoming an integral part of your being? Can you see evidences of the work God is doing in you to transform you ?

Reviewing the journal can provide insight into additional dynamics of your spirituality that emerge from your response to the Word. Reviewing may serve to reveal deeper levels of your being or doing which the Word of God is seeking to address. Often our initial response to the Word takes place at the more superficial levels of our being. We begin our response at the symptom level, not at the root of the problem. However, if our response is genuine, motivated by a deep desire to have God do a perfect work in us, God will use our response at the superficial or symptom level to open us to the deeper realities that need to be opened to the Word in responsive and disciplined obedience. Regular review of the journal can illuminate those points where the Word is probing and moving us to a deeper level of response (161-62).

Assignment

During the next seven days: (1) Make an intentional effort to adopt a formational approach to reading the Scriptures. (2) Intentionally make use of some of the meditative techniques to facilitate learning to embrace Christ and live in intimate union with Him. (3) Keep a record of your discoveries in a journal. Your journal entries can be a valuable resource to determine if and how you are transitioning from a more conceptual knowledge about God and Jesus Christ to a relational knowledge of God and Jesus Christ. In addition, your journal entries can be a valuable source to see how God is generating his own life into yours. (4) Share with another person what God is doing in your life.

2. **One of the ways** in which God generates his own love life in us is by way of **reminder**.

One such reminder is **memorizing and praying** the Word.

Assignment 1

During the next seven days memorize a few verses of the Scripture passages you have been reading. Pray them back to God each day as you memorize and make them your own.

Another reminder is **singing** the Word.

Assignment 2

During the next seven days sing the following song at least once a day. You can find the melody online at: www.music.alivefaith.com/music/inChristalone.wma

E. Overview of cultivating a God-generated life by being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

	Detachment	Bib-theol. Solution	Learning Activity	Desired Outcome
I	The Christian faith feels like a distant relationship.	Being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is the heart of the Christian faith.	Formational reading of the Scriptures	Experiencing the Christian faith as an intimate relationship through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit

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The Return of the Prodigal—Rembrandt van Rhijn

Lesson 2

**Surrendering to God's Father-Son Love
through the advance installment of the Holy
Spirit**

I Surrender All

Text: J.W. Van Deventer

Music: W.S. Weeden

1. All to Jesus I surrender;
all to him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust him,
in his presence daily live.

Refrain:

I surrender all, I surrender all,
all to thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.

2. All to Jesus I surrender;
humbly at his feet I bow,
worldly pleasures all forsaken;
take me, Jesus, take me now.
(Refrain)

3. All to Jesus I surrender;
make me, Savior, wholly thine;
fill me with thy love and power;
truly know that thou art mine.
(Refrain)

4. All to Jesus I surrender;
Lord, I give myself to thee;
fill me with thy love and power;
let thy blessing fall on me.
(Refrain)

5. All to Jesus I surrender;
now I feel the sacred flame.
O the joy of full salvation!
Glory, glory, to his name!
(Refrain)

A. What lives in your soul?

Ms. Surrender is a rich woman. At one time, she was extremely attached to her possessions. In various ways her wealth defined who she was and what she did. Even though she prayed, read her Bible and went to church, she did not feel the presence of God very often because she was more attached to her material goods than to God. Yet, God confronted her with her disloyalty and brought her to repentance. She surrendered her whole life to Jesus and became one flesh with Him. Now Jesus defined who she was and what she did. Because her possessions no longer blocked God from entering her soul with his love, Ms. Surrender began to feel the presence of God in a very intense way on a daily basis.

Mr. Resist is also very rich. In various ways his wealth also defines who he is and what he does. He also prays, reads his Bible and goes to church, but does not feel the presence of God very often either because he is more attached to his possessions than God. Even though God often confronts him with his disloyalty through his reading of the Scriptures and the preaching on Sundays, he does not repent. As a result, he continues to miss the presence of God because his attachment to his wealth keeps blocking God from entering his soul with his love.

Reflect

In 1 Corinthians 6:16-17, Paul writes: “Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, ‘The two will become one flesh.’ But he who unites himself to the Lord, is one with him in spirit.”

How is Mr. Resist united to his possessions and become one spirit with them? How is Ms. Surrender united to the Lord and one spirit with Him? If there something hindering you from becoming one spirit with Christ, what consequences would this have for feeling the presence of God in Christ?

B. God wants to enter your soul with his Father-Son love.

1. As God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit live in a community of love with one another, so Adam and Eve lived in a community of love with God, each other, creation and themselves before their fall into sin. They were able to do this because God generated his own life into them by breathing his own uncreated, eternal love life into them (Gen. 2:7). This is the same love the Father and the Son enjoy (Jn. 17:26). Thus, Adam and Eve's life was hidden with the Son in the Father (Col. 3:3; Jn. 14:23; 2 Pet. 1:4). The tree of life stood as a symbol that Adam and Eve would continue to enjoy this God-generated Father-Son love through the bond of Holy Spirit. On one condition, however: they had to continue to derive their life from God by surrendering their whole being to this Father-Son love life—living, moving and having their being in this love life.

Adam and Eve, however, fell out of love with God and willfully chose to generate their own life. Consequently, they refused to surrender to God and separated themselves from this divinely generated Father-Son love life (Gen. 3:1-7). Separating oneself from God's generated Father-Son love life and choosing to generate one's own life is the essence of the Fall.

Reflect

What resonance or dissonance do you feel with this interpretation of the essence of the Fall? Why do you feel this way? How do you see the repercussions of this choice in Adam and Eve's life and throughout the rest of the Scriptures? How have you felt these kinds of repercussions of this choice in your own life (i.e., leading a self-generated life of being in love with yourself instead of a God-generated one of being in love with God)?

2. God does not want us to separate ourselves from his divinely generated love life. Thus, He wants to reenter our souls with his love life. Consequently, John writes: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (Jn. 3:16). This eternal life is the same life that God breathed into Adam’s being in Paradise (Rom. 5:5). Thus, Jesus generates God’s love life to us. This is the message Jesus preached to the people of his day (Mk. 1:14-15). This is the essence of gospel and what it means to be saved.

In his *Divine Conspiracy*, Dallas Willard writes:

According to Gallup surveys, 94 percent of Americans believe in God and 74 percent claim to have made a commitment to Jesus Christ. About 34 percent confess to a ‘new birth’ experience . . . If you ask anyone from that 74 percent of Americans who say they have made a commitment to Jesus Christ what the Christian gospel is, you will probably be told that Jesus died to pay for our sins, and that if we will only believe he did this, we will go to heaven when we die. From: *Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering the Hidden Life in God San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998, 38, 42.*

Reflect

What kind of resonance or dissonance does this quotation create in you? Why do you feel this way? What is your understanding of what the gospel is? Does your understanding of the gospel tend to foster a conceptual knowledge about God or a personal knowledge of God? What impact does your understanding of the gospel have on God generating his life into your life?

3. In Jeremiah 31:31-34, Jeremiah makes a prophecy concerning the new covenant.

31 "The time is coming," declares the LORD,
"when I will make a new covenant
with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah.

32 It will not be like the covenant
I made with their forefathers
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt,
because they broke my covenant,
though I was a husband to ^[a] them, ^[b] "
declares the LORD.

33 "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel
after that time," declares the LORD.
"I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

34 No longer will a man teach his neighbor,
or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,'
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest,"
declares the LORD.
"For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more."

When God, as an act of a new creation (*bara* [cf. Gen. 1], Jer. 31:22), reenters our lives with his Father-Son love, He writes his love life deep within the inner recesses of our souls. As a result, the Word of Christ dwells richly in us (Col. 3:16). As the seed of regeneration, this Word of Christ regenerates us from above (Jn. 3:3, 5; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 Jn. 3:9). In this way, we learn to live and move and have our being in love (= God) again (Mt. 22:37-40; 2 Pet. 1:4).

Reflect

Does the Word of Christ really live in you or do you keep it at a distance? Since the Word of Christ is a Person, does Christ Himself live in you with his Son-Father love? What implication does your answer have on whether you experience your life as self-generated or God-generated? What implication does your answer have for the extent to which you feel the presence of God in Christ?

C. Blocking God from entering your soul with his Father-Son love.

A human person consists of an immaterial or inner self and a material or outer self. The immaterial or inner self is often called the soul. With one's soul a person engages reality and attempts to have a meaningful relationship with this reality, such as God, others, creation and oneself. Yet, because the soul is a many-sided phenomenon, engaging reality in a meaningful way is not a matter of course. For instance, a soul can "open itself up but simultaneously has the ability to close itself; [it is] a source of life but with the capacity to jam up within itself; [it can] surrender in love but [is] also capable of devouring one's life; it can live together in peace with the core of one's personality but also depress the inner self; it can turn inward and be beside itself. The peculiar nature of the soul is that it is multidimensional and highly mobile" *From Kees Waaijman, Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods, trans. John Vriend. Leuven: Peeters, 2002, 436.*

That the soul is multidimensional and highly mobile also comes to expression in the **various words** used for the soul in the Scriptures. For instance, when the word *heart* is used, it often refers to the desires and motives of the soul. When the word *mind* is used, it often refers to the way the soul thinks and decides. When the word *spirit* is used, it often refers to the way the soul relates to God. Then, of course, there is the *will* or volitional dimension of the soul. This multidimensionality entails we should never reduce the soul to one particular function, but realize the soul functions in a variety of ways. In addition, we should realize that when one function is dominating, the other functions of the soul operate along with this function.

The soul not only has multiple functional dimensions, but also many **psychological dimensions**. Kees Waaijman distinguishes the following seven psychological dimensions of the soul (435-446).

1. *Your soul is an enclosed space*

Just as your body is an enclosed space, so your soul is an enclosed space too. Within this closed space, you feel, think and relate to God. This closed space is vulnerable (Ps. 116:3). Thus, when it is threatened, you erect walls to protect yourself. Consequently, we can keep God out of functions of our soul.

2. *Your soul is needy and sensitive*

Your soul is an enclosed space that seeks to be filled (Mt. 12:43-45). Thus, your soul can thirst or hunger (Ps. 63:1). For instance, your soul can thirst for attention, knowledge, appreciation or love. Consequently, your soul is also sensitive. It can be filled with fear and excitement, but also with deep peace and love. When your soul equates itself with what fills and satisfies it, it is estranged from itself (Eccl. 6:7; Mt. 6:25; 16:26). When your soul is not filled and satisfied with what it thirsts for, you run the risk of filling it with surrogate fillers. When this occurs, your soul is also estranged from itself for in both cases your soul is focused on itself and not God.

3. Your soul wants to live

The core element of your soul is life (Gen. 2:7). Thus, you are born with a strong desire to live. Consequently, your soul wants to grow and express itself. When your soul tries to live on its own, it becomes alienated from itself because it is made to live and move and have its being in God (Ac. 17:28). As a result, a soul cannot save itself, but needs to be saved.

4. Your soul is the self-presentation of your I

Your soul is the personal self-representation of your I (Ps. 116:8). However, you are not a victim of what goes on in your soul. As a result, you can reflect upon what goes on in your soul and speak to it (Ps. 42:5; 62:5; 103:1-2; Lk. 12:19-20). Accordingly, we can choose to surrender every function of our soul to God (Deut. 30:19-20).

5. Your soul is mobile

Your soul is highly mobile. It can go upward and downward, forward and sideways. Each of these movements, however, is ambiguous. A soul can go upward in prayer, but also in pride. It can go downward in humility, but also in depression. A soul can go sideways for freedom, but also because of greed. It can go forward in love, but also in bloodthirstiness. Consequently, we should not allow ourselves to be aimlessly tossed to and fro on the movements of our soul, but intentionally focus the functions of our soul on God, always reflecting upon our deepest motives.

6. Your soul rests in the (O)ther

Your soul has the capacity to step out of itself. Your soul most dearly longs to be with its lover (S of S. 3:1-4). Being with the other entails personal contact, communion and intimacy. Ultimately, your soul seeks rest in the Other (Ac. 17:27-28). Accordingly, Jesus calls everyone to find rest in Him (Mt. 11:28-30). When we do, we will be one with Him as He is one with the Father (Jn. 17:11, 21, 23). This intimate union, however, will not be attained if we seek God in a consumerist, spiritually materialistic spirit, more for what we can get out of Him than for He Himself.

7. Your soul can be lost

You can lose your soul for another and consequently lose it. You can do this negatively (sex, money, attention, power, status), but also positively (Mother Theresa, Martin Luther King, Gandhi). Positively losing your soul for the other is the heart of the gospel (Jesus and those who want to follow Him). Losing your soul includes taking down its protective walls, disallowing it to be controlled by its neediness and sensitivity, and losing its tendency to try to save itself. This is not an end in itself but a means to offering your soul in love to the other, making itself into the other's substitute, by feeling, thinking and acting from the perspective of the other's wellbeing. Only this kind of vicarious love will satisfy the soul. We will only be able to give this kind of love if this kind of love has first entered into our soul (1 Jn. 4:7-11).

Reflect

*How does this description of the seven psychological dimensions of the soul resonate with you? Why is this? How might the way you relate to others influence the way you relate to God? Which dimension of your soul have you not (yet) surrendered to God for the sake of the other so that *He* can enter into this dimension of your soul with his Father-Son love? Why is this? What implications do you think this has for feeling the presence of God in Christ? What implications do you think this has for your life being God-generated or self-generated?*

D. Allowing God to enter your soul with his Father-Son love.

1. God wants to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate this love life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:23; 17:26; Col. 3:3; 2 Pet. 1:4). Compare your soul for a minute to a glass. God wants that glass to be full with the water of his love in Christ through his Holy Spirit. Yet, the more stones or obstacles (cf. the seven psychological dimensions of the soul) you have in this glass, the less water of God's love in Christ can be contained by this glass.

Assignment

During the next seven days, consider which stones or obstacles need to be removed out of your soul or glass so that God can enter your soul more fully with Father-Son love. Keep a record of your journey and discoveries of surrender in your journal.

2. **God uses his Word** to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate his own life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father. As the seed of regeneration, the Word of God generates God's life in you, exposes the stones in your soul and empowers you to remove them.

Assignment

(1) Using the meditative techniques you learned in lesson one, use the daily reading of the Scriptures to help discern which stones you need to surrender to Christ and how. (2) Keep a record in your journal of your journey and discoveries of surrender. (3) Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in God's Father-Son love entering deeper and more fully into your soul, such as being conscious of the presence of God in Christ., as you surrender more of your soul to Jesus Christ, (4) Share with someone else what God is doing in your life.

3. **One of the ways** in which God generates his Father-Son love life in us so that we live embedded with Christ in the Father is by way of **reminder**.

One such reminder is **memorizing and praying** the Word.

Assignment 1

During the next seven days memorize a few verses of the Scripture passages you have been reading. Pray them back to God each day as you memorize and make them your own.

Another reminder is **singing** the Word.

Assignment 2

During the next seven days sing the song at the beginning of the lesson at least once a day. You can find the melody online at: <http://www.hymnsite.com/lyrics/umh354.sht>.

E. Overview of cultivating a God-generated life by being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

	Detachment	Bib-theol. Solution	Learning Activity	Desired Outcome
1	The Christian faith feels like a distant relationship.	Being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is the heart of the Christian faith.	Formational reading of the Scriptures	Experiencing the Christian faith as an intimate relationship through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit
2	Not feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	God wants to enter our soul with his Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Identifying the dimensions of the soul that have not yet been surrendered to God	Feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit

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Theotokos with Christ

Lesson 3

**Receiving God's Father-Son Love
through the advance installment of the Holy
Spirit**

Amazing Grace

Words: John Newton

Music: James P. Carrell and David S. Clayton

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my Shield and Portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, Who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

A. Receiving and giving

Ms. Open spends a lot of time being with God and receiving from Him before she goes off and does things for God and others. Her worship of God flows forth from having received and experienced God's goodness in her life. Her confession of guilt and sin flows forth from her having received and experienced God's grace and mercy. Her wholehearted love for God flows forth from her having received and experienced God's love for her. When she ends her prayers with Amen, she tends to be still and listens to the Good Shepherd's voice. Consequently, Ms. Open's faith is more God-generated than self-generated.

Ms. Bustle is busier with what she can give to God than what God can give to her. She loves to worship God, but finds it difficult to let Him minister to her with his goodness. She daily confesses her sins and guilt to God, but finds it difficult to receive his grace and forgiveness. She spends a lot of time serving God, but finds it difficult to have God serve her with his grace and mercy. She wholeheartedly loves God, but finds it difficult to accept that God loves her. No sooner has she ended her prayer with Amen than she is busy doing things for God and others again. Consequently, Ms. Bustle's faith is more self-generated than God-generated.

Reflect

Who do you relate to more: Ms. Open or Ms. Bustle? Why? If you relate more to Ms. Bustle, what implications do you think this may have for your life being God-generated or self-generated?

B. Receiving is the basic posture of faith

1. In Paradise there was the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Reflect

How does the tree of life symbolize that the basic posture of Adam and Eve's faith was continual receptivity to the love life God had given them while the tree of knowledge of good and evil symbolizes their unwillingness to live in continual receptivity to the love life God had given them?

2. Humankind is created in the image of God.

Reflect

Since God is the generator of his own life and character, we can only properly function as image of God by being receptive to his Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

3. Please read the following passages:

19Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. 20For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. . . 30By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me (Jn. 5:19-20, 30).

49For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it (Jn. 12:49).

20On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you (Jn. 14:20).

Reflect

How do these passages illustrate that receptivity was the fundamental posture of Jesus' life? What resonance or dissonance do you feel with this? Why?

4. In his *Created for Community*, Stanley Grenz writes:

The doctrine of the Trinity means that the one God is a diversity-within-unity. The Father, Son, and the Spirit are eternally different from each other. And the three carry out different tasks in the one divine program . . . The early church theologians explained the differentiations among Father, Son, and Spirit y relating them to a double movement within the one God. They described this movement by two picture words, “generation” and “procession.” “Generation” provides a means to distinguish the Father and the Son: the Father generates the Son, and the Son is generated by the Father. ‘Procession” leads us to distinguish the Spirit from the Father and the Son: the Spirit is the one who proceeds from the Father (and from the Son) *From: Stanley J. Grenz, Created for Community: Connecting Christian Belief with Christian Living, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996, 45-46.*

Reflect

The receptive posture Jesus showed towards his Father during his earthly ministry is an extension of the receptive posture He has from all eternity as the eternally, generated Son of the Father.

5. How do the following texts illustrate that receptivity is the basic posture of the church and every child of God?

22Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 23For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything (Eph. 5:22-24).

4Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me (Jn.15:4-5)

12Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13children born not of natural descent,^[a] nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God (Jn. 1:12-13).

6. In his *Discipleship on the Edge*, Darrell Johnson writes:

Throughout the Scripture the word “received” is associated with the Spirit. In the Upper Room Jesus breathed on his disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22). On the day of Pentecost Peter says, “Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). When Paul visited Ephesus he did not sense the vitality that should be present in an authentic church so he asked, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” (Acts 19:2). We could list many other references.

The point is, Jesus calls us to remember the essential reality of the Christian life: the very life of God who indwelt the body of Jesus now indwells us. The human personality has now become the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19; 3:16). *From Darrell W. Johnson, Discipleship on the Edge: An Expository Journey through the Book of Revelation. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2004, 101-02.*

Reflect

The basic posture of faith is being receptive to God’s love in Christ through his Holy Spirit.

C. Receiving is a feminine characteristic of our soul

1. In Isaiah 42:13-14 we read:

13 The LORD will march out like a mighty man,
like a warrior he will stir up his zeal;
with a shout he will raise the battle cry
and will triumph over his enemies.

14 “For a long time I have kept silent,
I have been quiet and held myself back.
But now, like a woman in childbirth,
I cry out, I gasp and pant.

In Isaiah 66:13 we read:

13 As a mother comforts her child,
so will I comfort you;
and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.”

It appears that God has what we would call both masculine and feminine characteristics. Thus, being created in the image of God entails being created with both masculine and feminine characteristics.

Reflect

What dissonance do you experience when you realize that God has both masculine and feminine characteristics? Why do you feel this way? What dissonance or harmony do you experience when you realize that only to the extent that we develop and integrate our masculine and feminine characteristics will we adequately reflect and represent God? Why do you feel this way?

2. **Someone once made** the following list of characteristics frequently found in males and females.

Male <i>Take initiative</i> give charge lead extrovert	Female <i>React</i> receive wait follow introvert
<i>Head</i> analyze and structure reason logically use common sense abstract theoretical think in concepts	<i>Heart</i> give meaning reason associatively trust intuition concrete practical think in images
<i>Goal</i> do form solve issue focused erect boundaries	<i>Relation</i> watch be formed sense people focused make connections

Adapted from: Philip Troost, Christus Ontvangen: Gereformeerd en Charismatisch: Leeren van Elkaar, Kampen: Kok, 2006, 109.

Reflect

What resonance or dissonance do you feel with these lists? Why? Is there any truth in the lists? If so, what would you consider to be accurately characterized?

Reflect

What resonance or dissonance does the following thesis evoke in you: One of the reasons for our lack of living in union with God and having God generate his own love life into us is the underdevelopment of our feminine characteristics, especially our receptivity.

Reflect

Since God is the One who initiates his covenant of love with us in Christ through his Holy Spirit and thus wants us to be receptive to this love, He considers his church to be feminine. In what way is Mary, the mother of Jesus, the model of what it means for the church to be receptive to God's love life (Lk. 1:38)?

Reflect

Is the spiritual culture in your local congregation too masculine, too feminine or balanced?

D. Receiving God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit

1. God wants to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate this love life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:23; 17:26; Col. 3:3; 2 Pet. 1:4).

Assignment

Make an inventory of the characteristics of your soul that are underdeveloped. Make an intentional effort to develop these characteristics so that both the masculine and feminine characteristics of your soul are developed and integrated. Keep a record in your journal of your journey and discoveries. Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in God's Father-Son love entering deeper and more fully into your soul (such as, your faith becoming more God-generated than self-generated) as you are more receptive to this love.

2. **God uses his Word** to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate his own life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father. As the seed of regeneration, the Word of God generates Jesus' life in you by making you more receptive to God's Father-Son love.

Assignment

(1) Using the meditative techniques you learned in lesson one, use the daily reading of the Scriptures to help discern where you need to be more receptive to Christ and how. (2) Keep a record in your journal of your journey and discoveries of becoming more receptive. (3) Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in the love of God in Christ entering deeper and more fully into your soul as you become more receptive to this love. (4) Share with someone else what God is doing in your life.

3. **One of the ways** in which God generates his Father-Son love life in us so that we live embedded with Christ in the Father is by way of **reminder**.

One such reminder is **memorizing and praying** the Word.

Assignment 1

During the next seven days memorize a few verses of the Scripture passages you have been reading. Pray them back to God each day as you memorize and make them your own.

Another reminder is **singing** the Word.

Assignment 2

During the next seven days sing the song at the beginning of the lesson at least once a day.

E. Overview of cultivating a God-generated life by being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

	Detachment	Bib-theol. Solution	Learning Activity	Desired Outcome
1	The Christian faith feels like a distant relationship.	Being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is the heart of the Christian faith.	Formational reading of the Scriptures	Experiencing the Christian faith as an intimate relationship through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.
2	Not feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	God wants to enter our soul with his Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Identifying the dimensions of the soul that have not yet been surrendered to God	Feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit
3	The Christian faith is more self-generated than God-generated.	The basic posture of faith is being receptive to God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Develop and integrate the masculine and feminine characteristics of our soul.	The Christian faith is more God-generated than self-generated.

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The Lord's Supper

Lesson 4
Visualizing God's Father-Son Love
through the advance installment of the Holy
Spirit

The Lord's My Shepherd

Words: Scottish Psalter, 1650.

Music: CRIMOND, Jessie S. Irvine, 1872

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green; He leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

My soul He doth restore again;
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
Even for His own Name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear no ill;
For Thou art with me; and Thy rod
And staff my comfort still.

My table Thou hast furnishèd
In presence of my foes;
My head Thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me;
And in God's house forevermore
My dwelling place shall be.

A. Communicating visually

Pastor Accurate is a cognitive preacher who sees as his primary task to instruct the listener. He believes that if we are going to understand God, we need to know exactly who He is. Moreover, if we are going to obey God, we need to understand what He expects. Thus, Pastor Accurate works to make sure he gives the listener the necessary information so that he or she understands correctly. Sometimes, he thinks the listener's mind is like a kind of filing cabinet. Thus, the goal of his sermon is to make sure all the information is in the correct folders and placed in the proper drawers. Other times, he thinks of the mind of his listeners as a complicated piece of computer code written by God. A virus has infected the code, fatally altering key blocks of information and causing the data to be disarrayed. The listener cannot function properly according to the designer's intent if the code is in error. Thus, through preaching he works to fix the code, rooting out the virus and replacing it with the right information, making sure that all the correct codelines are in the right places so that the synapses fire correctly and the mind works as designed. Pastor Accurate, however, often feels detached from God and does not facilitate his listeners feeling close to God.

Pastor Imaginative is an affective preacher who sees his primary task to help listeners experience God through his Word. While He believes the experience is not the goal of the sermon, he intuitively feels it is the means by which the goal is experienced. That goal is an encounter with God's love in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Thus, Pastor Imaginative is fully engaged in the preaching moment. He does not so much describe the truth as he embodies it. He participates in the sermon not as one who only tells the truth, but as one who portrays it. He believes the listener always feels things when ideas are presented and that it is these feelings that motivate us to action. Understanding, according to him, can lead to the best intentions, but affection leads to action. Preaching must lead to a response and it will not do so unless it touches the heart. In order to evoke this response, Pastor Imaginative creates experience for listeners through the use of images. He paints pictures so as to evoke a specific response. As a result, his listeners feel very close to God.

Adapted from Kenton C. Anderson, Choosing to Preach: A Comprehensive Introduction to Sermon Options and Structures. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006, 95-96, 108-112

Reflect

Which preacher do you tend to relate to better? Why is this so? How have you experienced that understanding leads to best intentions, but affection leads to action? How do images or word pictures evoke emotions in you? How do these emotions lead to a sense of the nearness of God?

B. God also communicates his love visually

1. God also communicates his love for us visually. In Hebrews 11:3, we read, “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

In his commentary on this verse, John Calvin writes:

God has given us throughout the whole frame-work of this world, clear evidences of his eternal wisdom, goodness, and power; and though he is in himself invisible, he in a manner becomes visible to us in his works. Correctly then is this world called the mirror of divinity.

From: John Calvin, The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, trans. John Owen Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989, 266.

Gerard Manley Hopkins articulated the same idea in his poem “God’s Grandeur.”

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed ...
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things . . .
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

From: Tricia and David Porter, ‘Over the Bent World,’ Poems and Images from Gerard Manley Hopkins, Carlisle: Paternoster Publishing, 1999, 67.

Reflect

How does God visually communicate his love to you through his macro-creation (the universe) and his micro-creation (e.g., human beings)? In other words, how are you and the universe a mirror of divinity charged with the grandeur of God?

2. In Col. 1:15, Paul writes that Christ is the image or icon of the invisible God.

Reflect

In what way is Christ a window into what God’s love is like?

3. One of the gifts God gives us to visualize and symbolize his Father-Son love for us is the gift of the sacrament of baptism. A passage of Scripture that visualizes this love very well is Romans 6:1-14.

a. **In Romans 5:12-21**, Paul told us about the heart of the gospel. Because of God's faithfulness to his covenant promises the kingdom of grace and life has triumphed over the kingdom of sin and death. The question he now addresses is the place of the church in this triumph of the one kingdom over the other. Is the church still in Adam or is it in Christ? Does it live in the realm of sin and death or in the realm of grace and life?

In verses 1-2, Paul writes:

1What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

Reflect

According to these verses, which realm does the church live?

b **In verses 3-10**, Paul tells how we can be sure which realm the church lives in. If we want to know, we need to look at the Lord Jesus Christ.

3Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

5If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 6For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— 7because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

8Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. 10The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

Reflect

According to Paul, how does looking at Jesus Christ visualize for us which realm we live in? How does this show that the church's life is generated by God's Father-Son love?

c. In verses 3-4, Paul tells us that our baptism visualizes how the church is included in Jesus' death and resurrection.

Reflect

According to these verses, how does our baptism symbolize the interweaving of the story of Jesus' death and resurrection with the story of our death and resurrection? How does this show that the church's life is generated by God's Father-Son love?

d. In verse 6, Paul talks about the implications of our dying with Christ for our old self.

Reflect

How would you define what your old self is? How does verse 6 show that the death of old self is generated by God's Father-Son love?

e. In verse 11, Paul encourages members of the church to do their math and figure out what the implications are of their having died and arisen with Christ.

Reflect

Because we no longer live in the realm of sin and death, but in the realm of grace and life, what must each member of the church do according to Paul in verse 11? How does this illustrate that the Christian life is generated by God's Father-Son love?

f. In verses 12 and 13, Paul spells out what living in the realm of grace and life mean in practice?

Reflect

What does living in the realm of grace and life mean in practice?

g. **In verse 14**, Paul shows how Christians will be empowered to live in the realm of grace and life?

Reflect

How will Christians be empowered to live in the realm of grace and life? How does this illustrate that the Christian life is generated by God's Father-Son love?

Reflect

How often do you visualize and contemplate on God's Father-Son love for you symbolized in the sacrament of baptism? How would visualizing and contemplating God's Father-Son love symbolized in your baptism help you in experiencing the nearness of God? How does it help you in experiencing that the Christian life is God-generated and not self-generated?

4. Another gift God gives us to visualize and symbolize his love for us is the gift of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This sacrament visualizes that we:

(a) remember Christ (1 Cor. 11:24-26)

(b) have communion with Christ and each other (1 Cor. 10:14-17; 11:27-34)

(c) receive forgiveness and extend forgiveness (Mt. 26:26-28)

(d) renew our covenant commitment to God (Mk. 14:22-25)

(e) are nourished by Christ (Jn. 6:35-58)

(f) anticipate the return of Christ (Lk. 22:14-27)

(g) give thanks to God (Ac. 2:46-47).

Reflect

How would contemplating on each of the seven different pictures of the Lord's Supper illustrate that the Christian life is God-generated and not self-generated? Which picture do you tend to focus on when you celebrate the Lord's Supper? Why do you do this? How would making an intentional effort in contemplating one or more of the seven metaphors help in experiencing the nearness of God? How would this help in making your Christian life more God-generated?

C. In the depth of our soul we think visually

In Hebrews 11:27, we read that when Moses left Egypt with the people of Egypt, he persevered in faith because he “saw him who is invisible.” Likewise, in 2 Corinthians 4:18, Paul exhorts the church in Corinth to fix their eyes not on what is seen (temporal reality), but on what is unseen (the eternal glory that awaits them). This is possible because, according to Ephesians 1:18, we can see with the eyes of our heart. Obviously, we can visualize or form in our minds pictures of unseen realities.

This should not surprise us because in the depth of our soul we do not think in words and concepts, but visually or in images. Han de Wit sums this up very well when he writes:

When we watch a movie, we see a visual stream of images and also almost constantly hear a stream of voices and sound, often accompanied by music. The more we become involved in the movie and are caught up (!) in it (assuming it is a well-made movie that appeals to us), the less we distinguish those streams from one another, which is what allows a reality to unfold that engrosses us for an hour and a half. . .

Our six sources or streams of experience [five sensory and one mental] operate in approximately the same way. Our sensual experiences—that which we collect through our senses [what we hear, see, smell, taste or touch physically]—flow together with and combine with givens from a mental source [our mental experiences, such as what we think, find, feel, desire, our hopes and fears, our fantasies, our imagination and everything else that we can conceive of and goes through our mind].

From Han F. de Wit, The Spiritual Path: An Introduction to the Psychology of the Spiritual Traditions, trans. Henry Jansen & Lucia Hofland-Jansen, Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1999, 75-76.

Reflect

How often do you form a picture in your mind of unseen realities and contemplate on these realities? Why or why do you (not) do this often? How would visualizing unseen realities and contemplating on them help you in experiencing God’s Father-Son love and living out of this love?

Reflect

Forming a picture in your mind of God is a transgression of the second commandment. Thus, we should not do this.

D. Visualizing God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit

1. God wants to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate this love life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:23; 17:26; Col. 3:3; 2 Pet.1:4).

Assignment

Make an intentional effort during the next seven days to visualize or form a picture in your mind of God's Father-Son love and contemplate on these images. Keep a record in your journal of your journey and discoveries. Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in God's Father-Son love entering deeper and more fully into your soul as you formed mental pictures of this love.

2. **God uses his Word** to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate his own life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father. As the seed of regeneration, the Word of God generates God's life in you by giving you pictures of God's Father-Son love. For instance, Jesus is referred to as the bridegroom (Mt.9:15), the lamb of God (Jn. 1:29), the rock (1 Cor.10:4), the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20), the bread of life (6:35), the light of the world (Jn. 8:12), the door (Jn.10:9), the good shepherd (Jn.10:11), the resurrection and life (Jn. 11:25), the way (Jn.14:6), the truth (Jn. 14:6), the life (Jn.14:6), the true vine (Jn. 15:1).

Assignment

(1) Using the meditative techniques you learned in lesson one, use the daily reading of the Scriptures to motivate you to form in your mind pictures of God's Father-Son love and contemplate on this love. (2) Keep a record in your journal of your journey and discoveries of learning to visualize this love. (3) Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in God's Father-Son love entering deeper and more fully into your soul as you formed mental pictures of this love and contemplated on them. (4) Share with someone else what God is doing in your life.

3. Choose one of the following assignments:

a. Collect photos of scenes and situations that visualize God's Father-Son love. Arrange them together as a collage. Show the collage to others explaining why you feel these photos visualize God's Father-Son love.

b. Make a flower arrangement for an occasion, such as a church service, Bible study, birthday, that celebrates God's Father-Son love.

c. Draw a picture under the title "God's Father-Son love is seen in what He does." Or to be more specific, draw a picture under the title "God's Father-Son love in Langley" or some other location.

4. One of the ways in which God generates his Father-Son love life in us so that we live embedded with Christ in the Father is by way of **reminder**.

One such reminder is **memorizing and praying** the Word.

Assignment 1

During the next seven days memorize a few verses of the Scripture passages you have been reading. Pray them back to God each day as you memorize and make them your own.

Another reminder is **singing** the Word.

Assignment 2

During the next seven days sing at the beginning of the lesson at least once a day. You can find the melody online at: <http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/l/m/lmysheph.htm>

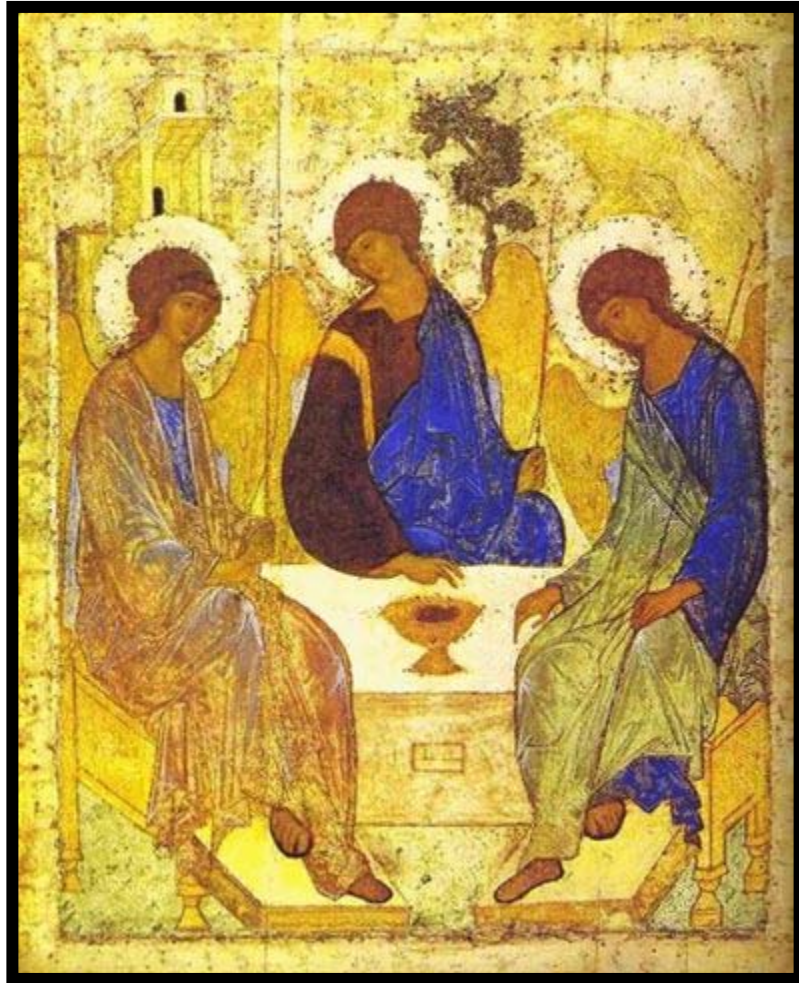
E. Overview of cultivating a God-generated life by being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

	Detachment	Bib-theol. Solution	Learning Activity	Desired Outcome
1	The Christian faith feels like a distant relationship.	Being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is the heart of the Christian faith.	Formational reading of the Scriptures	Experiencing the Christian faith as an intimate relationship through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.
2	Not feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	God wants to enter our soul with his Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Identifying the dimensions of the soul that have not yet been surrendered to God	Feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit
3	The Christian faith is more self-generated than God-generated.	The basic posture of faith is being receptive to God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Develop and integrate the masculine and feminine characteristics of our soul.	The Christian faith is more God-generated than self-generated.
4	Not feeling very close to God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	God also communicates his love visually.	Visualize God's Father-Son love and contemplate on the images of this love.	Feeling closer to God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

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Old Testament Trinity—Andrei Rublev

Lesson 5

**Radiating God's Father-Son Love
through the advance installment of the Holy
Spirit**

Shine, Jesus, Shine

Lord, the light of Your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness shining;
Jesus, Light of the World, shine upon us;
Set us free by the truth You now bring us
Shine on me, shine on me.

(R) Shine, Jesus, shine
Fill this land with the Father's glory;
Blaze, Spirit, blaze. Set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow
Flood the nations with grace and mercy;
Send forth Your Word
Lord, and let there be light.

Lord, I come to Your awesome presence
From the shadows into Your radiance;
By the blood I may enter Your brightness
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness
Shine on me, shine on me. (R)

As we gaze on Your kingly brightness
So our faces display Your likeness;
Ever changing from glory to glory
Mirrored here may our lives tell Your story
Shine on me, shine on me. (R)

A. Love radiates

Mr. Civic considers the Christian faith to be a public matter. Christ did not just come to die for his sins so that he can one day go to heaven. Christ also came to renew his life and to renew the lives of others through him and his local church community. Mr. Civic spends a lot of time in prayer and Bible reading so that he can radiate the love of Christ in this world. He loves going to church on Sunday to be equipped to be a faithful Christian in the surroundings in which God has placed him. Consequently, he makes an intentional effort to impact his surroundings during the week.

Mr. Private considers the Christian faith something to be kept to himself. Christ came to die for his sins so that one day he can go to heaven. This is a matter between him and God. Consequently, Mr. Private spends a lot of time with God in prayer and reading the Bible. He loves going to church on Sunday to hear the good news of forgiveness of his sins and the prospect of the life of heaven. Consequently, he makes no intentional effort to impact his surroundings during the week.

Reflect

Is your Christian faith more like Mr. Private's or Mr. Civic's? Why is this the case?

B. God's Father-Son love intrinsically radiates through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit

1. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are always radiating their love to one another and to us.

Reflect

How does Rublev's icon of the Trinity depict this?

2. What Rublev depicted in his icon is also recorded in the Scriptures.

a. How do you see **the Father** radiating his love for the Son in the following passages:

5While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" (Mt. 17:5)

9Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
10that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:9-11).

b. How do you see **the Son** radiating his love for the Father in the following texts?

19Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does (Jn. 5:19)

27"Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. 28Father, glorify your name!" (Jn. 12:27-28)

c. How do you see **the Spirit** radiating his love for the Father in the following texts?

15For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."
16The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children (Rom. 8:15-16).

3Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3).

d. **How do you see each of the three Persons** inviting us into their community of love in the following passages:

19that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19)

28"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Mt. 11:28-30)

5Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit (Jn. 3:5)

e. In his *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, Eugene Peterson writes:

The dance is *perichoresis*, the Greek word for dance. The term was used by our Greek theologian ancestors as a metaphor to refer to the Trinity. *Perichoresis*, wrote Karl Barth, “Asserts that the divine modes of existence condition and permeate one another mutually with such perfection that one is as invariably in the other two as the other two are in the one.” Imagine a folk dance, a round dance, with three partners in each set. The music starts up and the partners holding hands begin moving in a circle. On signal from the caller, they release hands, change partners, and weave in and out, swinging first one and then another. The tempo increases, the partners move more swiftly with and between and among one another, swinging, and twirling, embracing and releasing, holding on and letting go. But there is no confusion, every movement is cleanly coordinated in precise rhythms (these are practiced and skillful dancers!), as each person maintains his or her own identity. To the onlooker, the movements are so swift it is impossible at times to distinguish one person from another; the steps are so intricate that it is difficult to anticipate the actual configurations as they appear: *Perichoresis* (*peri* = around; *choresis* = dance). From: Eugene Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, 44-45.

Reflect

In order for us to radiate God’s Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit, the three Persons of the Trinity call us to move or dance with them and allow them to permeate and inhabit the different spheres of life through us as they permeate and inhabit one another. How do you relate to radiating the God-generated life as dancing with the three Persons of the Trinity and permeating and inhabiting the different spheres of life as they permeate and inhabit one another? Why do you feel this way?

3. In 1 Thess. 5:17, Paul writes, “Be joyful always.”

Reflect

Why and how would dancing with the Trinity and allowing them to permeate and inhabit the different spheres of life through you as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit permeate and inhabit one another enable you (always) to radiate the joy of God’s Father-Son love in a way that not dancing with the Trinity would not?

4. In Mk 14:33, we read: “He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,’ he said to them. ‘Stay here and keep watch.’”

Because Jesus had our weak and frail human nature, the prospect of the cross emotionally weakened Him. It appears Jesus had no difficulty sharing his weakness and vulnerability with Peter, James and John. In doing so, He was transparent about what lived in his heart.

In 2 Cor. 12:7-10, we read:

7To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Reflect

What resonance or dissonance do you feel about radiating the vulnerability of Christ? Why do you feel this way?

Reflect

Why and how would dancing with the Trinity and allowing them to permeate and inhabit one another enable you to authentically radiate the vulnerability of Christ in a way that not dancing with the Trinity would not?

5. In Col. 2:1-2, we read:

1I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. 2My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, 3in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Reflect

Why and how would dancing with the Trinity and allowing the Trinity to permeate and inhabit the different spheres of life as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit permeate and inhabit one another enable you to radiate the wisdom of Christ in your marriage or friendships?

6. In Mt. 12:18-21, Isaiah prophesies about Jesus Christ in the following manner:

18"Here is my servant whom I have chosen,
the one I love, in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will proclaim justice to the nations.
19He will not quarrel or cry out;
no one will hear his voice in the streets.
20A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out,
till he leads justice to victory.
21In his name the nations will put their hope."

Reflect

Why and how would dancing with the Trinity and allowing the Trinity to permeate and inhabit the different spheres of life as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit permeate and inhabit one another enable you to radiate the justice of God in society?

C. Looking at Jesus with the eyes of our heart enables us to radiate God's Father-Son love.

In lesson 4, we discovered the importance of learning to think visually or to think with the eyes of our heart. We discovered that learning to think visually is all the more important since in the depth of our souls we do not think in words and concepts, but visually. Learning to think visually is important when it comes to radiating Jesus.

In Jn 3:16, we read: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life." In the two verses preceding this verse, we read: "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of man must be lifted up that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life." Believing for the Israelites who had been bitten by the snakes involved looking up at the snake in faith with their eyes. Thus, believing today also involves looking to Jesus in faith with the eyes of our heart.

In Heb. 2:9, the author of Hebrews picks up on this notion of looking at Jesus with the eyes of our heart when he writes: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor" Similarly, **in Heb. 12:2**, he writes: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

In 2 Cor. 3:18, Paul also picks up on this notion of looking to Jesus with the eyes of our heart when he writes: "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (ESV).

In Lesson 1, I mentioned that my wife and I recently spent four days in Whistler. Looking at all the beautiful scenery in Whistler had an astonishing transformative effect on us. Now, when I allow this scenery to pass before the eyes of my heart, it continues to have an astonishing transformative impact on me. In much the same way, the more we allow the scenery of the glory of Jesus (i.e., his incarnation, life, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, enthronement and attributes) to pass before the eyes of our hearts, the more this glory of Jesus will have a transformative impact on our lives. In fact, we will begin to radiate this glory.

Reflect

How often do you intentionally focus the eyes of your heart on the scenery of the glory of Jesus? How would beholding the scenery of glory of Jesus foster dancing with the Trinity and allowing them to permeate and inhabit the different spheres of life through you as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit permeate and inhabit one another? Where would you look to let the scenery of the glory of Jesus pass before the eyes of your heart?

D. Radiating God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit

1. God wants to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate this love life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:23; 17:26; Col. 3:3; 2 Pet. 1:4). In fact, God calls you to move or dance with Him and allow the Trinity to permeate and inhabit the different spheres of life as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit permeate and inhabit one another.

Assignment

Make an intentional effort during the next seven days to radiate God's Father-Son love by dancing with the Trinity and allowing them to permeate and inhabit the different spheres of life as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit permeate and inhabit one another. Do this by intentionally looking at the multi-faceted sceneries of this love with the eyes of your heart. Keep a record in your journal of your journey and discoveries. Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in God's Father-Son love entering deeper and more fully into your soul as you continued to gaze intently at God's many-sided forms of love manifested in Jesus Christ.

2. **God uses his Word** to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate his own life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father. As the seed of regeneration, the Word of God generates God's life in you by giving you pictures of God's Father-Son love. See, for instance, Jesus' compassion (Mt. 12:20; 14:14; Lk. 7:13; Mt. 15:32; 9:36; 11:28-29); Jesus' grace and mercy (Mt. 9:27-30; Lk. 6:35-36); Jesus' joy (Lk. 10:21; Heb. 12:20); Jesus' justice (Jn. 4:9; Mt. 9:10-12; Lk. 18:1-18); Jesus' patience (Lk. 22:32-34; Jn. 12:27; Mt. 26:39-42); Jesus' wisdom (Lk. 2:40; Mt. 7:29; Jn. 4:29; Lk. 14:5-6).

Assignment.

(1) Using the meditative techniques you learned in lesson one, use the daily reading of the Scriptures to intently look at multicolored pictures of God's Father-Son love. (2) Keep a record in your journal of your journey and discoveries of learning to look at this many-sided love and radiate this love in the various spheres of life as you are caught up in the dance of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (3) Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in God's Father-Son love entering deeper and more fully into your soul as you learned to intently look at the many sceneries of this love. (4) Share with someone else what God is doing in your life.

3. One of the ways in which God generates his Father-Son love life in us so that we live embedded with Christ in the Father is by way of **reminder**.

One such reminder is **memorizing and praying** the Word.

Assignment 1

During the next seven days memorize a few verses of the Scripture passages you have been reading. Pray them back to God each day as you memorize and make them your own.

Another reminder is **singing** the Word.

Assignment 2

During the next seven days sing the song at the beginning of the lesson at least once a day.

You can find the melody online at:

<http://www.walkthroughlife.com/midis/christian/shinejesusshine.htm>

E. Overview of cultivating a God-generated life by being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

	Detachment	Bib-theol. Solution	Learning Activity	Desired Outcome
1	The Christian faith feels like a distant relationship.	Being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is the heart of the Christian faith.	Formational reading of the Scriptures	Experiencing the Christian faith as an intimate relationship through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.
2	Not feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	God wants to enter our soul with his Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Identifying the dimensions of the soul that have not yet been surrendered to God	Feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit
3	The Christian faith is more self-generated than God-generated.	The basic posture of faith is being receptive to God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Develop and integrate the masculine and feminine characteristics of our soul.	The Christian faith is more God-generated than self-generated.
4	Not feeling very close to God. through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	God also communicates his love visually.	Visualize God's Father-Son love and contemplate on the images of this love.	Feeling closer to God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

5	Experiencing the Christian faith more as a private relationship than a public one	Christians are called to move or dance with Trinity and inhabit and permeate the different spheres of life as the Persons of the Trinity inhabit and permeate one another.	Learning to move or dance with the Trinity by intentionally beholding and contemplating the multi-faceted sceneries of God's Trinitarian love with the eyes of our hearts	Experiencing the Christian faith more as a public relationship through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.
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Baptism of St. Augustine

Lesson 6

**Discovering God's Father-Son Love
through the advance installment of the Holy
Spirit**

God Moves in Mysterious Ways

Words: William Cowper

Music: DUNDEE, Scottish Psalter, 1615

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

A. No mystery to the Christian faith.

For Ms. Lackluster the Christian faith is about understanding right beliefs and practising right living. Just as a scientist increasingly understands more of the workings of the universe the more she studies it, so a Christian increasingly understands more of the workings of God the more she studies God. Consequently, most of the Christian faith is plain and straightforward to her. Therefore, she explains the Christian faith in a clear and straightforward way to others trying to convince others of the truth of the Christian faith.

For Ms. Exhilarating the Christian faith is about discovering the mystery of living embedded with Christ in the Father. Just as two people in love increasingly discover more about the richness and beauty of being in love, so a Christian who is in love with Jesus increasingly discovers more of the richness and beauty of living in communion with Him. Consequently, there is much in the Christian faith that is unclear to her. Therefore, she tries to give others an experience of Jesus Christ so that they will be drawn to love Him just like she does and discover more of this love as she is.

Reflect

What is the Christian faith like for you? Do you identify more with Ms. Lackluster or Ms. Exhilarating? Why is this the case?

B. A mystery to be discovered

1. The Scriptures refer to God's plan of salvation as a secret or mystery. In *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, H. Krämer writes:

In order to understand the term [mystery] properly, the full range of meanings that develop up to the time of the NT must be taken into account. From the Greek concept of *μυστήριον* [= mystery] comes a strictly esoteric [= private, hidden, secret, supernatural] sense of an experience that is inaccessible to human reason, as well as the theme of life from death. Out of the Jewish tradition comes a less stringently esoteric and the transcendent, humanly inaccessible *mystery* of God, which is historically set in action by God himself in his acts of salvation and judgment in the past, present, and future, which already now has been made evident to the one who is called and will be made evident to all on the last day. In terms of content, *μυστήριον* [= mystery] refers primarily to the saving acts of God in Christ. . . .

Fundamental to the use of *μυστήριον* [= mystery] in the NT is the basic meaning of the Greek word: "that which is unspeakable," i.e., inaccessible to natural reason (but accessible to faith). As a result, the term is ambiguous; assertions regarding its specific content must be made on the basis of the respective context. The conceptual tradition of Jewish apocalyptic (the hidden and then revealed *mystery*) plays a prominent role here. The Greek elements that the word bears also must be considered, for they are retained even when the word is a translation for Hebrew terms. *From: H. Krämer μυστήριον in Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (eds.) Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament. Vol. 2. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990, 446, 449.*

The point for us to remember is that, according to Krämer's analysis, there are two aspects to the word *mystery*: a Jewish objective historical aspect and a Greek subjective mysterious aspect.

Study the following passages in their context and try to determine which element is dominant: the Jewish historical or the Greek experiential.

a. *Mk 4:11*

11 He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables

b. 1 Cor. 2:1, 7

1When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom (NRSV).

7but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory (NASB).

c. 1 Cor. 15:51-52

51Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

d. Rom. 11:25-26

25I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. 26And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

"The deliverer will come from Zion;
he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.

e. Col. 1:26-27

26the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. 27To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

f. Rom. 16:25-26

25Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him— 27to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

g. Eph. 1:9-10

9And he^[a] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

h. Eph. 3:6

6This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

i. Eph. 5:31-32

31"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." 32This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

j. 1 Tim. 3:9

9They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience (ESV).

k. 1 Tim. 3:16

14Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, 15if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. 16Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great:

He^[a] appeared in a body,
was vindicated by the Spirit,
was seen by angels,
was preached among the nations,
was believed on in the world,
was taken up in glory.

Reflect

How do the two aspects of the word mystery relate to what we have learned about a conceptual knowledge about God and a relational knowledge of God? How do the two aspects relate to what we learned about discovering the unity of the development of life with God as a reality on earth, centered in the person of Jesus?

2. In Ephesians 3:16-19, Paul prays:

16I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Reflect

Why will we be able to enter deeper into the mystery of the God-generated life of God filling us with the fullness of his love in Christ together with all the saints rather than on our own? What is your experience in this regard?

3. In lesson one, we saw that Paul compares the God-generated life of living embedded with Christ in the Father to the intimate fellowship a husband and wife enjoy in a marriage

In *Intimate Allies*, Dan Allender and Tremper Longman write:

Married people confront life as a battle. As intimate allies, they push back the chaos. With the power of God, marriage is an awesome calling and at times a delightful prelude of heaven. But no matter what joy or what sense of meaning is found in marriage, it is always involved in a war. At times marriage itself is part of the war . . .

A successful marriage is one in which two broken and forgiving people stay committed to one another in a sacrificial relationship in the face of life's chaos. We are intimate allies in the war. We rejoice together in our victories and cry together as we encounter setbacks. But even in the setbacks, we can have joy because we know that the final victory is ours. We look forward to the ultimate Wedding, which our own weddings only faintly reflect.

True intimacy comes about only when a husband and wife are willing to be broken and to bless one another with forgiveness. Our marriages ought to provide the context for seeing our own sin and for changing. The Christian life within the context of marriage is a forward-moving path. As time goes on in a marriage that operates on the principle of brokenness and forgiveness, the marriage will get stronger and stronger" *From: Dan B. Allender and Tremper Longman III, Intimate Allies: Rediscovering God's Design for Marriage and Becoming Soul Mates for Life, Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1995, 346-47.*

Reflect

What resonance or dissonance does the Allender/Longman quote arouse in you? Why is this the case? In what ways might the mystery of the God-generated life of living embedded with Christ in the Father be like the mystery of the intimate fellowship in marriage where spouses are willing to be broken and to bless one another with forgiveness?

4. In 1 Timothy 3:16, Paul writes that the mystery of godliness—Jesus—is undeniably great. In his article on μυστήριον [= mystery], H. Krämer writes, “In 1 Timothy, the formal, somewhat ceremonial use of μυστήριον should be understood in the sense of ‘ineffable [= inexpressible beyond words] ultimate ground (root, basis)’ of a particular conduct.” He then goes on to say that in 1 Tim. 3:16, this inexpressible ground is the Christ-event described in the hymn. Thus, Christ is not only the embodiment of what godliness is all about. He is also the One who now fills us with his own godliness through his Spirit in a manner more easily experienced than described in word.

Reflect

How are you discovering that the more you surrender yourself to Christ and receive the godliness He has achieved for you, the more He mysteriously generates his own godliness in and through you?

C. A mystery to be initiated into

1. The mystery of marriage is something you are slowly initiated into through personal experience. The mystery of the God-generated life of living in union with God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is something you are initiated into too. The early church understood this and consequently initiated new converts into this mystery through mystagogical catechesis (= a catechesis that reveals mysteries). For instance, in his *To the Newly Baptized*, Clement of Alexandria writes:

Let everything you do be done for God, both deeds and words; and refer all that is yours to Christ; and constantly turn your soul to God; and lean your thought on the power of Christ, as if in some harbour by the divine light of the Saviour it were resting from all talk and action. And often by day communicate your thoughts to men, but most of all to God at night as well as by day; for let not much sleep prevail to keep you from your prayers and hymns to God, since long sleep is a rival of death. Show yourself always a partner of Christ who makes the divine ray shine from heaven; let Christ be to you continual and unceasing joy. From Clement of Alexandria, *To the Newly Baptized* at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/clement-baptized-beta.html>

Reflect

How would you evaluate the spiritual formation you have received? Were you more informed about the mysteries of the Christian faith or initiated into them? Did this lead more to a conceptual knowledge about God or a relational knowledge of God? Is your church more characterized by an information culture or initiation culture?

2. In the mystagogical (= revealing mysteries) tradition, the reliability and credibility of faith transfer is strongly linked to the person who transfers and not to the knowledge that is transferred. In his *Contemplative Psychology*, Han de Wit writes:

Reliability in contemplative psychology is determined by persons and by their honesty—that is, by their ability and willingness to expose themselves, stand naked, as they are without deceiving themselves. For this reason, contemplative psychological reliability is a personal affair, a *relationship between people*, whereas scientific psychological reliability is an impersonal affair, an objective *relationship between things and the information about them*. We will call reliability as it is used in contemplative psychology *personal reliability*. From: Han de Wit, *Contemplative Psychology*, trans. Marie Louise Baird, Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1991, 172.

Reflect

How well equipped do you feel in initiating others into the mystery of the God-generated life of living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit? Why? How well equipped do you consider others in initiating you into this mystery? Why? If need be, what practical steps could you take to equip yourself better?

3. In his *Humble Apologetics*, John Stackhouse writes:

The fundamental problem of religious allegiance, then, is not about what we think, but what or whom we love. And if we see that, we will see again one of the fundamental affirmations of this book: that Christian apologetics cannot convince anyone to become a Christian. Apologetics cannot do so, in this case, because argument cannot produce affection . . . No, the question is whether one *loves* God From: John Stackhouse, Jr., *Humble Apologetics: Defending the Faith Today*, Oxford: University Press, 2002, 113.

Reflect

How can your and/or your church initiate unbelievers into the mystery of the God-generated life of God's love in Christ? What role would personal authenticity play in this process?

D. A mystery to enjoy

1. God wants to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate this love life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:23; 17:26; Col. 3:3; 2 Pet. 1:4). In fact, God calls you to move or dance with Him and allow the Trinity to permeate and inhabit the different spheres of life as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit permeate and inhabit one another.

Assignment

Make an intentional effort during the next seven days to discover more of the mystery of the Christian faith by living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Make an intentional effort to initiate others into this mystery by giving them experiences of God's Father-Son love. Keep a record in your journal of new things you discovered. Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in God's Father-Son love entering deeper and more fully into your soul as you discovered more of the mystery of this love and/or initiated others into this mystery.

2. **God uses his Word** to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate his own life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father. As the seed of regeneration, the Word of God generates God's life in you and initiates you into the mystery of God's Father-Son love.

Assignment

(1) Using the meditative techniques you learned in lesson one, use the daily reading of the Scriptures to be initiated into the mystery of God's love in Christ. (2) Keep a record in your journal of your journey and discoveries. (3) Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in God's Father-Son love entering deeper and more fully into your soul as you were initiated in the mystery of the God-generated life of living embedded with Christ in the Father. (4) Share with someone else what God is doing in your life.

3. **One of the ways** in which God generates his Father-Son love life in us so that we live embedded with Christ in the Father is by way of **reminder**. One such reminder is **memorizing and praying** the Word.

Assignment 1

During the next seven days memorize a few verses of the Scripture passages you have been reading. Pray them back to God each day as you memorize and make them your own.

Another reminder is **singing** the Word.

Assignment 2

During the next seven days sing the song at the beginning of the lesson at least once a day. You can find the melody online at:

<http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/g/m/gmovesmw.htm>

E. Overview of cultivating a God-generated life by being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

	Detachment	Bib-theol. Solution	Learning Activity	Desired Outcome
1	The Christian faith feels like a distant relationship.	Being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is the heart of the Christian faith.	Formational reading of the Scriptures	Experiencing the Christian faith as an intimate relationship through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.
2	Not feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	God wants to enter our soul with his Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Identifying the dimensions of the soul that have not yet been surrendered to God	Feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit
3	The Christian faith is more self-generated than God-generated.	The basic posture of faith is being receptive to God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Develop and integrate the masculine and feminine characteristics of our soul.	The Christian faith is more God-generated than self-generated.
4	Not feeling very close to God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	God also communicates his love visually.	Visualize God's Father-Son love and contemplate on the images of this love.	Feeling closer to God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

5	Experiencing the Christian faith more as a private relationship than a public one.	Christians are called to move or dance with Trinity and inhabit and permeate the different spheres of life as the Persons of the Trinity inhabit and permeate one another.	Learning to move or dance with the Trinity by intentionally beholding and contemplating the multi-faceted sceneries of God's Trinitarian love with the eyes of our hearts	Experiencing the Christian faith more as a public relationship through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit
6	Experiencing the Christian faith to be about right beliefs and right conduct.	The Christian faith is about growing in discovering what it means to live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	Develop an initiation culture of personal experience within the community of faith.	Experiencing the Christian faith to be about discovering what it means to live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit

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The Scream—Edvard Munch

Lesson 7

**Representing God's Father-Son Love
through the advance installment of the Holy
Spirit.**

Will You Let Me Be Your Servant

Words: Richard Gillard, 1977, alt.

Tune: Richard Gillard, 1977; adapted by Betty Pulkingham

1.

Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I might have the grace to let you be my servant, too.

2.

We are pilgrims on a journey, we are trav'lers on the road.
We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.

3.

I will hold the Christ-light for you in the night time of your fear.
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

4.

I will weep when you are weeping, when you laugh I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.

5.

When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.

6.

Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I might have the grace to let you be my servant, too.

A. A world in need of hope

Mr. Neighbourhood believes that the only hope for the world is the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. While this gospel is based on the forgiveness of sins, it not only ministers to the soul, but to the whole person and society. Consequently, Mr. Neighbourhood and his church not only present the gospel of the kingdom in word, but also in deeds of compassion and justice.

Mr. Atonement believes that the only hope for the world is the gospel of forgiveness of sins. Consequently, does his best to wins souls for Christ so that they can be kept out of hell and enter into heaven. Since the gospel ultimately pertains to the wellbeing of the soul, Mr. Atonement and his church do not concern themselves with deeds of compassion and justice.

Reflect

Who do you relate to more: Mr. Atonement and his church or Mr. Neighbourhood and his church? Why?

B. Jesus and the church represent God's hope to the world

1. Jesus embodies or represents God's hope for the world by announcing that the kingdom of God is near (Mk. 1:14-15).

Reflect

What is this kingdom and how was it near? How would this represent God's hope for the world?

2. **As the Messiah or Christ**, Jesus fulfilled his ministry among the people of his day as prophet, priest and king. At that time, there was a lot of spiritual darkness. There was considerable religious activity, but little real faith. As a result, many of them were disoriented as to the meaning and purpose of their lives. In this spiritual disorientation and darkness, Jesus prophetically shone with the light of the gospel of the kingdom calling the people to believe and follow Him as the orientation point of their lives (Mt. 5-7). At that time, there was also a lot of brokenness, pain, sorrow and need. Jesus served the people in a priestly manner by healing a lot of brokenness, alleviating a lot of pain, giving comfort in a lot of sorrow and filling a lot of need (Mk. 5:1-20). In doing so, He gave the people a foretaste of what life would one day be like on the new earth (Rev. 21:4). Moreover, He paid for the condemnation that their sin created, and the brokenness that it caused. At that time, there was also a lot of injustice because people were enslaved to themselves and the powers of this world. As the people's Messiah king, Jesus broke the power of this slavery by defeating the devil and sin on Calvary's cross (Col. 2:15). As prophet, priest and king, Jesus represented God's hope for the world.

As Christians, we share in Christ's anointing (Ac. 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:27). This means that as Jesus fulfilled his messianic or Christ ministry as prophet, priest and king, we fulfill our Christian ministry as prophet, priest and king, too. In this way, Jesus draws us into his own life and work and continues his ministry as the Christ in and through us and we represent God's hope for our world as Jesus did for his.

Reflect

How is Jesus continuing his life and ministry as prophet, priest and king through you? How is He doing this through your local congregation? What improvements could you or your local congregation make?

3. One section of a recently published appeal to live the biblical narrative entitled “A Call to an Ancient Evangelical Future,” reads as follows:

6. On the Church's Embodied Life in the World

We call for a cruciform holiness and commitment to God's mission in the world. This embodied holiness affirms life, biblical morality, and appropriate self-denial. It calls us to be faithful stewards of the created order and bold prophets to our contemporary culture. Thus, we call evangelicals to intensify their prophetic voice against forms of indifference to God's gift of life, economic and political injustice, ecological insensitivity, and the failure to champion the poor and marginalized. Too often we have failed to stand prophetically against the culture's captivity to racism, consumerism, political correctness, civil religion, sexism, ethical relativism, violence, and the culture of death. These failures have muted the voice of Christ to the world through his church and detract from God's story of the world, which the church is collectively to embody. Therefore, we call the church to recover its counter-cultural mission to the world.

From: “A Call to an Ancient Evangelical Future” at
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/009/11.57.html>.

Reflect

How is your local congregation standing prophetically against our culture's captivity to racism, consumerism, political correctness, civil religion, sexism, ethical relativism, violence, and the culture of death? How is your local congregation representing God's hope for the world in this regard?

4. In the prologue of “A Call for an Ancient Evangelical Future,” we read:

Today, as in the ancient era, the church is confronted by a host of master narratives that contradict and compete with the gospel. The pressing question is: Who gets to narrate the world? "The Call to an Ancient Evangelical Future" challenges evangelical Christians to restore the priority of the divinely inspired biblical story of God's acts in history. The narrative of God's kingdom holds eternal implications for the mission of the church, its theological reflection, its public ministries of worship and spirituality, and its life in the world. By engaging these themes, we believe the church will be strengthened to address the issues of our day.

From: From: “A Call to an Ancient Evangelical Future” at
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/009/11.57.html>.

In an interview with Robert Webber and Phil Kenyon, the conveners of this document, the conveners are asked a number of questions including the following three:

The call says, "Today, as in the ancient era, a pressing issue is who narrates the world." What does that mean?

There are a lot of proposed narratives of the world. Some people say, "Let's narrate the world by Communism." (They're still with us.) Others say, "Let's narrate the world by Islamic fundamentalism" or "Let's narrate the world by democracy." These are the three leading contenders. But God's kingdom is what narrates the world for Christians.

What do those stories say?

The Communist story arises out of an atheistic view and says we have to bring workers and management together to create a communal world. The Islamic fundamentalist story is that Allah will rule over the world through Muslims. One way to implement that is to get rid of all the infidels. The story of democracy says freedom is the most important thing.

All three stories are political. In a contest between Communism, Islam, and democracy, I'll go with democracy. But as Christians, we're about the politics of Jesus and about the politics of the kingdom. Our primary belongingness is to that realm, as opposed to any other political realm. So we're at odds with all earthly politics.

All of those stories see a glorious future.

Absolutely. And so does the Christian story.

From: "Together in the Jesus Story" at
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/009/10.54.html>.

Reflect

What is so compelling about the kingdom narrative over against other narratives? How is your local congregation living the master narrative of Jesus and representing God's hope for the world in the face the master narrative of Islamic fundamentalism? What improvements could your congregation make?

5. In Ephesians 3:10, we read: "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms."

In his *The Message of Ephesians*, John Stott writes:

The church as a multi-racial, multi-cultured community is like a beautiful tapestry. Its members come from a wide range of colorful backgrounds. No other human community resembles it. Its diversity and harmony are unique. It is God's new society. And the many-coloured fellowship of the church is a reflection of the many-coloured . . . wisdom of God.

So then, as the gospel spreads throughout the world, this new and variegated Christian community develops. It is as if a great drama is being enacted. History is the theatre, the world is the stage, and the church members in every land are the actors. God himself has written the play, and he directs and produces it. Act by act, scene by scene, the story continues to unfold.

From: John Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1979, 123-24.

Reflect

How does the visible local church become a significant way for you to represent God's hope for the world? Is the visible local church central for you in living the story of Jesus and representing God's hope for the world or is it a mere addendum for you, i.e., you prefer to live the story of Jesus in an individualistic and not a communal way?

C. You represent God's hope for the world in Jesus Christ

In his *God's Outrageous Claims*, Lee Strobel shares a poem a new Christian ended her letter to him with. She wrote:

Representing Jesus

*Do you know
do you understand
that you represent Jesus to me?*

*Do you know
do you understand
that when you treat me with gentleness
it raises the question in my mind
that maybe He is gentle, too.
Maybe He isn't someone
who laughs when I am hurt.*

*Do you know
do you understand
that when you listen to my questions
and you don't laugh,
I think, "What if Jesus is interested in me, too?"*

*Do you know
do you understand
that when I hear you talk about arguments
and conflicts from the past,
I think, "Maybe I am just a regular person
instead of a bad, no-good little girl
who deserves abuse.*

*I you care
I think maybe He cares—
and then there's this flame of hope
that burns inside of me
and for a while
I am afraid to breathe
because it might go out.*

*Do you know
do you understand
that your words are his words?*

*Your face his face
to someone like me?
Please, be who you say you are.
Please, God, don't let this be another trick.
Please let this be real.
Please.*

*Do you know
do you understand
that you represent Jesus to me?*

From: *Lee Stobel, God's Outrageous Claims: 13 Discoveries About Doubt, Sex, Loneliness, business, Forgiveness and More, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997, 71-72.*

Reflect

*What do others detect when they are around you? How do you represent Jesus to them?
What signs of the hope of the coming kingdom are you setting up in your environment?*

Reflect

We and our church can be theologically orthodox, but in our actions heretical.

D. Representing God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit

1. God wants to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate this love life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:23; 17:26; Col. 3:3; 2Pet. 1:4). In fact, God calls you to move or dance with Him and allow the Trinity to permeate and inhabit the different spheres of life as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit permeate and inhabit one another.

Assignment

Make an intentional effort during the next seven days to represent Christ to others by setting up signs of the hope of coming kingdom of God. Keep a record in your journal of your journey and discoveries. Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in God's Father-Son love entering deeper and more fully into your soul as represented Christ by setting up signs of the hope of the coming kingdom of God.

2. **God uses his Word** to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate his own life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father. As the seed of regeneration, the Word of God generates God's own life in you so that you are able to represent Him.

Assignment

(1) Using the meditative techniques you learned in lesson one, use the daily reading of the Scriptures to be nurtured in representing Christ. (2) Keep a record in your journal of your journey and discoveries. (3) Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in the God's Father-Son love entering deeper and more fully into your soul as you represent Christ to others. (4) Share with someone else what God is doing in your life.

3. **One of the ways** in which God generates his Father-Son love life in us so that we live embedded with Christ in the Father is by way of **reminder**.

One such reminder is **memorizing and praying** the Word.

Assignment 1

During the next seven days memorize a few verses of the Scripture passages you have been reading. Pray them back to God each day as you memorize and make them your own.

Another reminder is **singing** the Word.

Assignment

During the next seven days sing the song at the beginning of the lesson at least once a day. You can find the melody at <http://rockhay.tripod.com/worship/music/willyouletme.htm>

E. Overview of cultivating a God-generated life by being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

	Detachment	Bib-theol. Solution	Learning Activity	Desired Outcome
1	The Christian faith feels like a distant relationship.	Living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is the heart of the Christian faith.	Formational reading of the Scriptures	Experiencing the Christian faith as an intimate relationship.
2	Not feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	God wants to enter our soul with his Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Identifying the dimensions of the soul that have not yet been surrendered to God	Feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit
3	The Christian faith is more self-generated than God-generated.	The basic posture of faith is being receptive to God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Develop and integrate the masculine and feminine characteristics of our soul.	The Christian faith is more God-generated than self-generated.
4	Not feeling very close to God.	God also communicates his love visually.	Visualize God's Father-Son love and contemplate on the images of this love.	Feeling closer to God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

5	Experiencing the Christian faith more as a private relationship than a public one.	Christians are called to move or dance with Trinity and inhabit and permeate the different spheres of life as the Persons of the Trinity inhabit and permeate one another.	Learning to move or dance with the Trinity by intentionally beholding and contemplating the multi-faceted sceneries of God's Trinitarian love with the eyes of our hearts	Experiencing the Christian faith more as a public relationship through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.
6	Experiencing the Christian faith to be about right beliefs and right conduct.	The Christian faith is about growing in discovering what it means to live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	Develop an initiation culture of personal experience within the community of faith.	Experiencing the Christian faith to be about discovering what it means to live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit
7	Experiencing the hope the Christian faith has to offer this world makes little difference in the day-to-day affairs of this world because this hope primarily about forgiveness of sins.	The hope of the gospel for the world includes not only forgiveness of sins, but also setting up tangible signs of the enduring, eschatological kingdom of God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Remembering that the church represents Jesus to the world. Thus, our gentleness is Jesus' gentleness, our understanding his understanding, our words his words, our face his face.	Offering the world the hope of the presence of Jesus Christ by setting up tangible signs of the enduring, eschatological kingdom of God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

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Paul in Christ

Lesson 8

**Living embedded with Christ in God's Father-Son
Love through the advance installment of the Holy
Spirit**

Crucified with Christ

Words: Michael A. Schmid

Music: Michael A. Schmid

Chorus

I've been crucified with Christ
Oh Christ, alive in me
And the life I live, I live by faith
In the Son who died for me
I've been crucified with Christ
Oh Christ, alive in me
And the life within my body now's
The life he lives in me

Verse 1

I bring nothing but a heart
That's full of sin and ripped apart
And I can't even make a start of walking in your
way
But in your cross, your love I'm given
On your cross, my sins forgiven
By your cross, new life I'm living, rising ev'ry day

Verse 2

Help me stand, I'm full of weakness
Help me speak, I'm full of meekness
Help me shine through all the bleakness
Trusting only you
Without you I'm just not able
Take me, Lord, up to your table
Feed me, fill me, Lord, enable me to follow you

Bridge (trio)

Voice 1: Crucified with Christ, Crucified with Christ (3 times)

Voice 2: No more do I live my life for me,
But for him who died for me
No more do I live my life for me but for Christ in me.

Voice 3: Now Christ is alive and living in me, living in me
Now Christ is alive
The life that I live, he lives in me.

A. Living detached from God's Father-Son love.

Ms. Exterior believes that it matters very much how a Christian behaves. First, it matters to God. Consequently, she does her best to keep all the commandments of God so that God is pleased with her. Second, it matters to others. As a result, she does her best to keep all the commandments of God in order to be a blessing for others. Third, it matters for creation. She, therefore, does her best to keep all of the commandments of God so that the wellbeing of creation is not undermined, but enhanced by her behaviour. Fourth, it matters for herself. Accordingly, she keeps all of the commandments as best as she can so that it will go well with her and others.

Ms. Interior also believes that it matters very much how a Christian behaves. Because it matters to God, she lives embedded with Christ in Him through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit so that she derives her strength from God and not herself. Because it matters to others, she lives embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit so her doing will be the result of her being embedded with Christ in the Father. Because it matters to creation, she lives in Christ who holds all of life together. Because it matters to herself, she lives embedded with Christ in the Father so that out of his fullness she may receive one blessing after another.

Reflect

Do you tend to live your life more like Ms. Exterior or Ms. Interior? Why?

B. Living embedded in God's Father-Son love.

1. Living embedded with Christ in the Father is, first of all, a corporate reality. The whole human race is included in Adam. The church is included in Christ (5:12-21). In this connection, Lewis Smedes observes:

Sometimes Paul speaks of the whole Church as being in Christ. Some of the salutations that he uses place the congregation in Christ (1 Thess. 1:1; Phil. 1:1). And he talks to members as the "faithful in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2). He speaks of the churches in Judea as "churches of God in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 2:14). When he speaks of the "freedom which we have in Christ Jesus," he apparently has the Church in mind (Gal. 2:4). He refers to the church as one body in Christ (Rom. 12:5). Being in Christ, the Church knows that sociological distinctions are irrelevant to its existence (Gal. 3:28).

Reflect

What resonance or dissonance do you feel about the whole church being included in Christ? Why do you feel this way?

2. In Rom. 5:17, Paul writes:

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Reflect

What is this reign of life Paul is talking about? Would there be any connection to a recovery of some of the life of Paradise Lost and a foretaste of some of the life of Paradise Regained? How does this reign of grace and life become a vital reality in the life of the church members? (Cf. Rom. 5:11; Jn. 1:12-13)

3. In Colossians 1:25-27, Paul writes:

25I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— 26the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. 27To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Reflect

Drawing on what you learned in lesson 6, what would be the two aspects of this mystery? Which aspect do you think is dominant?

4. In Galatians 2:19-21, Paul writes:

For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. 20I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"^[a]

In Eph. 3:16-19, Paul prays:

16I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Reflect

How would you describe how Paul lived his life before he discovered the mystery of Christ in him, the hope of glory? How does Paul's prayer for the church help us in understanding what he means about Christ living in him through faith? How would you compare Paul's newfound center of his life compared to yours? What might you have to crucify in order to be able to say what Paul says?

5. Please read the following passages:

On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you (Jn. 14:20)

I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them (Jn. 17:26).

For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3)

Reflect

How does our living in Christ and Christ in us relate to Christ living in the Father and the Father in Christ? How would this relationship relate to what Paul says in Colossians 3:3? What insight does this give into the mystery of the God-generated life of living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit?

6. Reflect

What might be some of the consequences of placing more emphasis on what Christ did for us than on what He does in us?

7. In his *The Message to Ephesians*, John Stott writes:

Fundamental to New Testament Christianity is this concept of the union of God's people with Christ. What constitutes the distinctness of the members of God's new society? Not just that they admire or even worship Jesus, not just that they assent to the dogmas of the church, not even that they live by certain moral standards. No, what makes them distinctive is their new solidarity as a people who are 'in Christ'. By virtue of their union with Christ they have actually shared in his resurrection, ascension and session. In the 'heavenly places', the unseen world of spiritual reality, in which the principalities and powers operate (3:10; 6:12) and in which Christ reigns supreme (1:20), there God has blessed his people in Christ (1:3) and there he has seated them with Christ (2:6). For if we are seated with Christ in the heavenlies, there can be no doubt what we are sitting on: thrones! Moreover, this talk about solidarity with Christ in his resurrection and exaltation is not a piece of meaningless Christian mysticism. It bears witness to a living experience, that Christ has given us on the one hand a new life (with a sensitive awareness of the reality of God, and a love for him and for his people) and on the other a new victory (with evil increasingly under our feet). We were dead, but have been made spiritually alive and alert. We were in captivity, but have been enthroned. From John R. W. Stott: *The Message of Ephesians*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1979, 81.

Reflect

How have you experienced that living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit has given you a new life with a sensitive awareness of the reality of God and a love for Him and his people? How have you experienced that living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit has given you a new victory with evil increasingly under your feet?

C. Having no need of God's Father-Son love.

1. In his *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, Eugene Peterson writes:

We are moral beings to the core—the very universe is moral. Right and wrong are embedded in the creation. It matters what is done, said, believed, even thought. Morality is fundamental and non-negotiable.

But *moralism* is something quite different. Moralism means constructing a way of life in which I have no need of a saving God. Moralism is dead; morality is alive. Moralism works off of a base of human ability and arranges life in such a way that my good behaviour will guarantee protection from punishment or disaster. Moralism works from strength, not weakness. Moralism uses God (or revelation of God) in order not to need God any longer. Moral codes are used as stepping stones to independence from God.

Moralism works from the outside: it imposes right behaviour on oneself or others. There is no freedom in it, and no joy. Moralism is a moral grid that is set on life. Up against this grid, I can see exactly where I fit or don't fit, where you fit or don't fit, what actions are right and which are wrong. And once I know that, what else is there? I either do it or don't. And you either do it or don't. Simple. *From: Eugene Peterson, Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, 145-46.*

Reflect

What resonance or dissonance do you feel about what Peterson writes about moralism? What experience do you have with moralism in your own life? Your church? What is the cure for all moralism? Why?

2. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin writes:

We must now examine this question, How do we receive those benefits which the Father bestowed on his only-begotten Son—not for Christ’s own private use, but that he might enrich poor and needy men? First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us. Therefore, to share with us what he has received from the Father, he had to become ours and to dwell within us. *From: John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion. John T. McNeill, ed., trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960, III, 1, 1:537.*

Discuss

What resonance or dissonance do you feel hearing Calvin say that as long as Christ does not dwell in us, we remain separated from Him and all that He has done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us? Why do you feel the way you do? How does what Calvin writes relate to what Jesus once said in John 15:1-8?

D. Living embedded with Christ in God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit

1. God wants to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate this love life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:23; 17:26; Col. 3:3; 2 Pet. 1:4). In fact, God wants you to live in Christ and not your own strength so you can move or dance with the Trinity and allow the Trinity to permeate and inhabit the different spheres of life as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit permeate and inhabit one another.

Assignment

Make an intentional effort during the next seven days to live in Christ and not your own strength (= moralism). Keep a record in your journal of your journey and discoveries. Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in God's Father-Son love entering deeper and more fully into your soul as you learned to live in Christ.

2. **God uses his Word** to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate his own life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father. As the seed of regeneration, the Word of God generates God's own life in you so that you are able to live in Him.

Assignment

Using the meditative techniques you learned in lesson one, use the daily reading of the Scriptures to be nurtured in living in Christ. Keep a record in your journal of your journey and discovery. Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in the love of God in Christ entering deeper and more fully into your soul as you intentionally live in Christ. Share with someone what God is doing in your life.

3. **One of the ways** in which God generates his Father-Son love life in us so that we live embedded with Christ in the Father is by way of **reminder**.

One such reminder is **memorizing and praying** the Word.

Assignment 1

During the next seven days memorize a few verses of the Scripture passages you have been reading. Pray them back to God each day as you memorize and make them your own.

Another reminder is **singing** the Word.

Assignment 2

During the next seven days sing the song at the beginning of the lesson at least once a day. You can find the melody at http://www.truevinemusic.com/crucified_with_christ.htm

E. Overview of cultivating a God-generated life by being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

	Detachment	Bib-theol. Solution	Learning Activity	Desired Outcome
1	The Christian faith feels like a distant relationship.	Being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is the heart of the Christian faith.	Formational reading of the Scriptures	Experiencing the Christian faith as an intimate relationship through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit
2	Not feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	God wants to enter our soul with his Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Identifying the dimensions of the soul that have not yet been surrendered to God	Feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit
3	The Christian faith is more self-generated than God-generated.	The basic posture of faith is being receptive to God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Develop and integrate the masculine and feminine characteristics of our soul.	The Christian faith is more God-generated than self-generated.
4	Not feeling very close to God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	God also communicates his love visually.	Visualize God's Father-Son love and contemplate on the images of this love.	Feeling closer to God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

5	Experiencing the Christian faith more as a private relationship than a public one.	Christians are called to move or dance with Trinity and inhabit and permeate the different spheres of life as the Persons of the Trinity inhabit and permeate one another.	Learning to move or dance with the Trinity by intentionally beholding and contemplating the multi-faceted sceneries of God's Trinitarian love with the eyes of our hearts	Experiencing the Christian faith more as a public relationship through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.
6	Experiencing the Christian faith to be about right beliefs and right conduct.	The Christian faith is about growing in discovering what it means to live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	Develop an initiation culture of personal experience within the community of faith.	Experiencing the Christian faith to be about discovering what it means to live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit
7	Experiencing the hope the Christian faith has to offer this world makes little difference in the day-to-day affairs of this world because this hope iprimarily about forgiveness of sins.	The hope of the gospel for the world includes not only forgiveness of sins, but also setting up tangible signs of the enduring, eschatological kingdom of God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Remembering that the church represents Jesus to the world. Thus, our gentleness is Jesus' gentleness, our understanding his understanding, our words his words, our face his face.	Offering the world the hope of the presence of Jesus Christ by setting up tangible signs of the enduring, eschatological kingdom of God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

8	Living dis-embedded from God because faith is over objectified by placing more emphasis on what Christ did <i>for</i> us than on what He does <i>in</i> us.	The mystery of the gospel is living in Christ and Christ living embedded in us through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	Remembering that moralism or self generated living is a way of life that does not need God.	Living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit by placing just as much emphasis on what Christ does <i>in</i> us as on what He did <i>for</i> us.
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The Holy Spirit

Lesson 9

**Being Conformed to God's Father-Son Love
through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit**

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

Words: Edwin Hatch, 1878

Music: TRENTHAM, Robert Jackson

Breathe on me, breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, breath of God,
Until my heart is pure,
Until with Thee I will one will,
To do and to endure.

Breathe on me, breath of God,
Blend all my soul with Thine,
Until this earthly part of me
Glow with Thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, breath of God,
So shall I never die,
But live with Thee the perfect life
Of Thine eternity.

A. Praying for the Spirit of Christ

Mr. Probability prays a lot to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is because the Holy Spirit has a dominant place in his faith life. Consequently, he is very receptive to what the Holy Spirit is able to do in his life. As a result, he personally experiences the work of the Spirit in his life.

Mr. Improbability does not pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit very often. This is because the Holy Spirit does not have a dominant place in his faith life. Consequently, he is not very receptive for what the Holy Spirit is able to do in his life. As a result, he has very little personal experience of the work of the Holy Spirit in his life.

Reflect

Are you more like Mr. Improbability or Mr. Probability? How often do you pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Why? How often do you notice that the Holy Spirit is doing things in your life? If the Holy Spirit were taken away from you, what difference would that make in your life?

B. Being conformed by the Spirit to Christ

I. Conformity to Christ or Christlikeness is:

*a. the purpose of the **Father's love** (Rom. 8:29)*

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

*b. the purpose of the **Son's work of redemption** (Rom. 8:3-4)*

³For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, ⁴in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

*c. the purpose of the **Spirit's work of regeneration** (Gal. 5:22-23)*

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

*d. the reason why **the Spirit groans** (Rom. 8:26-27)*

²⁶In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. ²⁷And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

*e. the reason why **all things work together for good** for those who love God and are called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28)*

²⁸And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Reflect

What is conformity to Christ or Christlikeness? How have you experienced that conformity to Christ is (a) the purpose of the Father's love? (b) The purpose of the Son's work of redemption? (c) The purpose of the Spirit's work of regeneration? (d) The reason why you groan? (e) The reason why all things work together for good in your life? How does conformity to Christ bring glory to the Father?

2. In Gal. 3:1-5, Paul writes:

1 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. 2 I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? 3 Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? 4 Have you suffered so much for nothing—if it really was for nothing? 5 Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?

In Galatians 4:19, Paul writes:

My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you . . .

Reflect

According to Gal. 3:1-5, what kind of conformity to Christ is Paul referring to? What thoughts does the metaphor of being in the pains of childbirth evoke in you? How have you been in the pains of childbirth for the sake of your local congregation as a whole or members individually?

3. The promise of the new covenant is that God will pour out his Spirit in a way He did not do in the old covenant (Ac 2:14-21). One of the things the Spirit will do is put the law of God in our minds and write it on our hearts (Jer. 31:33).

Reflect

What does this mean and how have you experienced this? How does what you experience relate to what Jesus says in John 6:35 and 10:3-6, 14-15?

4. In 1 Cor. 4:15, Paul writes, “Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.” Essentially, Paul is saying here that the Spirit used his preaching to form Christ in them.

Reflect

How is Christ formed in you through the preaching of God’s Word? How is Christ formed in you through your reading of and meditation on the Scriptures?

5. In his *The Doctor—A Person*, John Stott writes:

In Colossians, chapter 3, St Paul gives us two general principles governing personal relationships. Here they are: 'Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.' The second is: 'Whatever you do, work at it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men' (verses 17 and 23). Now let me tell in my own words what I believe these two principles mean. Firstly, I have got to learn, if I am a Christian, to treat other people as if I were Jesus Christ. That is what it means to do everything *in the name of* the Lord Jesus. To do something in somebody else's name, is to do it as his representative. When David stood on the field of battle against Goliath, he said: 'I come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts.' That is, I am not coming in my own name, I am coming as his representative. So to the Christian, to do everything in the name of Jesus Christ, is to do it as if he were Jesus Christ. I have got to learn, if I am a Christian, to treat other people with respect and the consideration, the thoughtfulness and the graciousness with which Jesus Christ himself would treat them.

The second principle is the exact opposite. It is to learn to treat people as if *they* were Jesus Christ. I must learn to do everything as unto the Lord. The roles are now reversed and I must learn to treat every person with the graciousness, the humility, the understanding, and the courtesy, not now that he would give to them but that I would give to him . . .

I tell you that these two principles, to treat other people as if they were Christ and as I were Christ, are as realistic as they are revolutionary. This is not idealist rubbish. This is practical advice about personal relationships.

From John Stott. The Doctor—A Person, Cape Town: Medical Christian Fellowship, 1959, 4.

Reflect

What resonance or dissonance do you feel with this John Stott quotation? Why do you feel this way? What personal experience do you have with treating other people as if they were Christ and as if you were Christ? How would embodying this advice lead to Christlikeness or conformity to Christ?

6. Reflect

Regeneration involves being regenerated from the self-generated life to the God-generated life of living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

C. Being receptive to the Spirit of Christ

1. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Paul writes, "Pray continually (= all the time)." This has been called listening prayer or compared to being online with God during your waking hours.

Reflect

What resonance or dissonance do you feel with praying continually being compared to being online with God 24 hours a day? Why is this? How often are you online with God? Why? Why would not being online with God tend to lead to a self-generated life while being online with God lead to a God-generated life?

2. Reflecting on "When he has brought out all of his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice" (Jn. 10:4) and "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Rom. 8:16), Bill Freeman writes in his *The Supplied Life*:

From John 10 we see that the Lord's voice in our experience is like an inner knowing. Verses 4-5 say, ⁴"And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, *for they know his voice*." ⁵Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, *for they do not know the voice of strangers*." Also, in verse 14 the Lord says, "I am the good shepherd; and *I know My sheep, and am known by My own*." This inner knowing of the Lord's voice is similar to experiencing an inner drawing. We are moved and touched from within. There is a deep inner consciousness and conviction. This means that the Lord's voice is written into our very consciousness. For example, when we received Christ into us, it was because we were convinced by this inner knowing that we should receive Him. *Outwardly*, we may have *heard* a preacher sharing the gospel, or we may have *read* a tract explaining to our mind the way of salvation. But *inwardly* we *knew* that receiving Christ was the right thing to do. This inner knowing to follow the Lord as our Shepherd is simply His voice speaking in our consciousness.

Another example of this inner knowing is given in Romans 8:16: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." The Spirit witnessing with our spirit is an inner knowing and consciousness. This is His way of speaking to us in the most intimate and personal manner. Instead of hearing an outward voice, something apart from us, we have an inner consciousness of His abiding presence. This is how we know and understand the Lord's voice. *From Bill Freeman, The Supplied Life, Scottsdale: Ministry Publications, 1995.*

Reflect

What is your experience of hearing God speak to you by being embedded Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit? How do you discern whether it is God speaking to you or someone else?

3. In his *Beginning Well*, Gordon Smith writes:

Conversion comes in an encounter with truth—the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. A basic New Testament assumption is that only in coming to a new understanding, centered in Jesus Christ, can a person know God’s saving grace. There is no conversion without a fundamental change of mind—or, at the very least, an understanding of the truth of the gospel that can be owned and embraced. *From: Gordon T. Smith, Beginning Well: Christian Conversion & Authentic Transformation, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001, 158.*

Reflect

What role does your mind or new understanding of truth play in discerning what the Spirit of Christ is saying to you? What role does your mind or new understanding play in your learning to lead a God-generated life of living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit?

4. Discuss

The more receptive and expectant you are to the work of the Holy Spirit in conforming you to Christ, the more you will experience the Holy Spirit conforming you to Christ.

D. Being conformed to God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit

1. God wants to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate this love life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:23; 17:26; Col. 3:3; 2 Pet. 1:4). In fact, God wants to conform you to Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit so that you move or dance with the Trinity and allow them permeate and inhabit the different spheres of life as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit permeate and inhabit one another.

Assignment

Make an intentional effort during the next seven days to pray that the Holy Spirit would increasingly conform you to Christ. Also make an intentional effort to be receptive and expectant to the Spirit's work. Keep a record in your journal of your journey and discoveries. Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in God's Father-Son love entering deeper and more fully into your soul as you grew in conformity to Christ.

2. **God uses his Word** to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate his own life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father. As the seed of regeneration, the Word of God generates his own life in you so that you are increasingly conformed to Him in Christ.

Assignment

(1) Using the meditative techniques you learned in lesson one, use the daily reading of the Scriptures to be conformed to Christ. (2) Keep a record in your journal of your journey and discovery. (3) Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in the love of God in Christ entering deeper and more fully into your soul as you were conformed to Christ. (4) Share with someone what God is doing in your life.

3. **One of the ways** in which God generates his Father-Son love life in us so that we live embedded with Christ in the Father is by way of **reminder**. One such reminder is **memorizing and praying** the Word.

Assignment 1

During the next seven days memorize a few verses of the Scripture passages you have been reading. Pray them back to God each day as you memorize and make them your own.

Another reminder is **singing** the Word.

Assignment 2

During the next seven days sing the song at the beginning of the lesson at least once a day. You can find the melody at <http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/b/o/bombog.htm>.

E. Overview of cultivating a God-generated life by being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

	Detachment	Bib-theol. Solution	Learning Activity	Desired Outcome
1	The Christian faith feels like a distant relationship.	Living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is the heart of the Christian faith.	Formational reading of the Scriptures	Experiencing the Christian faith as an intimate relationship through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.
2	Not feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	God wants to enter our soul with his Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Identifying the dimensions of the soul that have not yet been surrendered to God	Feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit
3	The Christian faith is more self-generated than God-generated.	The basic posture of faith is being receptive to God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Develop and integrate the masculine and feminine characteristics of our soul.	The Christian faith is more God-generated than self-generated.
4	Not feeling very close to God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	God also communicates his love visually.	Visualize God's Father-Son love and contemplate on the images of this love.	Feeling closer to God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

5	Experiencing the Christian faith more as a private relationship than a public one.	Christians are called to move or dance with Trinity and inhabit and permeate the different spheres of life as the Persons of the Trinity inhabit and permeate one another.	Learning to move or dance with the Trinity by intentionally beholding and contemplating the multi-faceted sceneries of God's Trinitarian love with the eyes of our hearts	Experiencing the Christian faith more as a public relationship through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.
6	Experiencing the Christian faith to be about right beliefs and right conduct.	The Christian faith is about growing in discovering what it means to live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	Develop an initiation culture of personal experience within the community of faith.	Experiencing the Christian faith to be about discovering what it means to live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit
7	Experiencing the hope the Christian faith has to offer this world makes little difference in the day-to-day affairs of this world because this hope is primarily about forgiveness of sins.	The hope of the gospel for the world includes not only forgiveness of sins, but also setting up tangible signs of the enduring, eschatological kingdom of God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Remembering that the church represents Jesus to the world. Thus, our gentleness is Jesus' gentleness, our understanding his understanding, our words his words, our face his face.	Offering the world the hope of the presence of Jesus Christ by setting up tangible signs of the enduring, eschatological kingdom of God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

8	Living dis-embedded from God because faith is over objectified by placing more emphasis on what Christ did <i>for</i> us than on what He does <i>in</i> us.	The mystery of the gospel is living in Christ and Christ living embedded in us through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	Remembering that moralism or self generated living is a way of life that does not need God.	Living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit by placing just as much emphasis on what Christ does <i>in</i> us as on what He did <i>for</i> us.
9	Not daily praying to be filled with the Holy Spirit because one may not be very receptive to and expectant of the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Conformity to Christ not only means that Christ is the pattern of our conformity, but also its source through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Praying continually or being online with God 24 hours a day (also known as listening prayer).	Christ being the source of our conformity to Him by daily praying to be filled with his Spirit and experiencing his generating and transforming work.

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My Father's World

Lesson 10

**Resting in God's Father-Son Love
through the advance installment of the Holy
Spirit**

This is my Father's World

Words: Maltbie D. Babcock, 1901

Music: TERRA BEATA, traditional English melody, arranged by Franklin L. Sheppard

This is my Father's world, and to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world: I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world, the birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white, declare their Maker's praise.
This is my Father's world: He shines in all that's fair;
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass;
He speaks to me everywhere.

This is my Father's world. O let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.
This is my Father's world: the battle is not done:
Jesus Who died shall be satisfied,
And earth and Heav'n be one.

This is my Father's world, dreaming, I see His face.
I ope my eyes, and in glad surprise cry, "The Lord is in this place."
This is my Father's world, from the shining courts above,
The Beloved One, His Only Son,
Came—a pledge of deathless love.

This is my Father's world, should my heart be ever sad?
The lord is King—let the heavens ring. God reigns—let the earth be glad.
This is my Father's world. Now closer to Heaven bound,
For dear to God is the earth Christ trod.
No place but is holy ground.

This is my Father's world. I walk a desert lone.
In a bush ablaze to my wondering gaze God makes His glory known.
This is my Father's world, a wanderer I may roam
Whate'er my lot, it matters not,
My heart is still at home.

A. The starting point of the Christian life

Ms. Doing believes that the starting point of the Christian life is responding to God's love with her life. She believes that when Jesus said, "It is finished!" He meant that He had made complete atonement for her sins. As a result, she now has to respond to this gift of God's love for her in Christ. Her being in Christ now flows from her doing for Christ. In fact, her being in Christ has become part of her doing for Christ. Consequently, restlessness not rest characterizes her Christian life.

Ms. Being has learned that the starting point of the Christian life is resting embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. She realizes that when Jesus said, "It is finished!" He meant just that. All that needed to be done for her salvation had been accomplished. As a result, she can rest from her self-effort and joyfully rest embedded with Christ in his finished work of redemption. All her doing for Christ now flows from being in Christ. In fact, her doing has become part of her being. Consequently, rest not restlessness characterizes her Christian life.

Reflect

Do you relate more to Ms. Doing or Ms. Being? Why?

B. Resting in the presence of God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit

1. In Genesis 2:2-3, we read:

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Reflect

What would it mean that God rested from all his work?

2. In Exodus 31:13, we read:

Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy.

Reflect

In what way is the Sabbath a sign of God's covenant with his people? See also Ex. 20:8-11; Dt. 5:12-15.

3. In Hebrews 4:8-11, we read:

8For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. 9There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; 10for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. 11Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

Reflect

In what way is the Sabbath an eschatological sign pointing to the eternal Sabbath rest that the people of God will enter at the consummation of history?

4. In Matthew 11:28-30, we read:

28"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Reflect

How did Jesus pull the eschatological Sabbath rest forward into time?

5. In Ephesians 1:3, we read:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Reflect

According to the first three chapters of Ephesians, what are some of these spiritual blessings? See also 1 Cor. 1:30.

6. Reflect

Since faith is receptivity to God's activity in Jesus Christ, faith involves resting from our work and resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ who generates his finished work in and through us by his Holy Spirit.

When we rest from our work and rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ, the eschatological Sabbath is experientially pulled forward in time and we enjoy a foretaste of this Sabbath through faith.

7. Reflect

If faith is being receptive to God's activity in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit, then faith also involves trusting that God will adequately give Himself out of the fullness of his riches in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

C. Cultivating resting in the presence of God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit

1. In his *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, Eugene Peterson writes:

Sabbath is not primarily about us or how it benefits us; it is about God and how God forms us. It is not, in the first place, about what we do or don't do; it is about God completing and resting and blessing and sanctifying. These are all things that we don't know much about; they are beyond us but not beyond our recognition and participation. But it does mean stopping and being quiet long enough to see, open-eyed with wonder—resurrection wonder. As we stand or sit in surprised and open receptivity to what is beyond us, what we cannot control, we cultivate the fear-of-the-LORD. Our souls are formed by what we cannot work up or take charge of: We respond and enter into what the resurrection of Jesus continues to do on the foundations of creation, our work and workplace.

If there is no Sabbath—no regular and commanded not-working, not-talking—we soon become totally absorbed in what we are doing and saying, and God's work is either forgotten or marginalized. When we work we are most god-like, which means that it is in our work that it is easiest to develop god-pretensions. Un-sabbathed, our work becomes the entire context in which we define our lives. We lose God-consciousness, God-awareness, sightings of resurrection. We lose the capacity to sing, "This is my Father's world" and end up chirping little self-centered ditties about what we are doing and feeling.

. . . I don't see any way out of it: if we are going to live appropriately in creation we must keep the Sabbath. We must stop running around long enough to see what he has done and is doing. We must shut up long enough to hear what he has said and is saying. All our ancestors agree that without silence and stillness there is no spirituality, no God-attentive, God-responsive life. From: *Eugene Peterson*, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation about Spiritual Theology*, *Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, 116-18*.

Discuss

What resonance or dissonance does the Peterson quote arouse in you? Why do you feel the way you do? What is your experience of Sabbath keeping? How does Sabbath keeping spiritually form you in resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ and living a God-generated life of living in God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit?

2. In his *Practicing His Presence*, Brother Lawrence writes:

In order to first form the habit of conversing with God continually and of referring all that we do to Him, we must first apply ourselves to Him with diligence. After a little such care, we shall find His love inwardly excites us to His presence without any difficulty. *From: Brother Lawrence, Practicing His Presence: Frank Laubach, Brother Lawrence, Library of Spiritual Classics, Volume I. Portland: Christian Books, 1981, 41-41.*

In his *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis writes:

That is why the real problem of the Christian life comes where people do not usually look for it. It comes the very moment you wake up each morning. All your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists in shoving them all back: in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in. And so on, all day . . .

We can do it only for moments at first. But from those moments the new sort of life will be spreading through our systems because now we are letting Him work at the right part of us. *From: C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, New York: Macmillan, 1978, 167.*

Discuss

What resonance or dissonance do you feel with Brother Lawrence and C.S. Lewis? Why do you feel this way? How do you practise the presence of God? What would having an interactive conversational relationship with God look like for you?

D. Coming to the rest of God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit

1. God wants to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate this love life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:23; 17:26; Col. 3:3; 2 Pet. 1:4). In fact, God wants to conform you to Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit so that you dance with the Trinity and allow the Trinity to permeate and inhabit the different spheres of life as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit permeate and inhabit one another.

Assignment

Make an intentional effort during the next seven days to rest in Jesus Christ and his finished work by practising the presence of God through having an interactive, conversational relationship with Him. Keep a record in your journal of your journey and discoveries. Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in God's Father-Son love entering deeper and more fully into your soul as you rested in Jesus and his finished work by practising the presence of God

2. **God uses his Word** to enter your soul with his Father-Son love and generate his own life in you so that you live embedded with Christ in the Father. As the seed of regeneration, the Word of God generates his own life in you so that you increasingly learn to rest in Jesus and his finished work.

Assignment

(1) Using the meditative techniques you learned in lesson one, use the daily reading of the Scriptures to learn to rest in Jesus and his finished work by practising the presence of God (2) Keep a record in your journal of your journey and discoveries. (3) Make a special mention of any changes you experienced in God's Father-Son love entering deeper and more fully into your soul as you learned to rest in Jesus and his finished work by practising the presence of God (4) Share with someone what God is doing in your life.

3. **One of the ways** in which God generates his Father-Son love life in us so that we live embedded with Christ in the Father is by way of **reminder**. One such reminder is **memorizing and praying** the Word.

Assignment 1

During the next seven days memorize a few verses of the Scripture passages you have been reading. Pray them back to God each day as you memorize and make them your own.

Another reminder is **singing** the Word.

Assignment

During the next seven days sing the song at the beginning of the lesson at least once a day.

E. Overview of cultivating a God-generated life by being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

	Detachment	Bib-theol. Solution	Learning Activity	Desired Outcome
1	The Christian faith feels like a distant relationship.	Living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is the heart of the Christian faith.	Formational reading of the Scriptures	Experiencing the Christian faith as an intimate relationship through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit
2	Not feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	God wants to enter our soul with his Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Identifying the dimensions of the soul that have not yet been surrendered to God	Feeling the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit
3	The Christian faith is more self-generated than God-generated.	The basic posture of faith is being receptive to God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Develop and integrate the masculine and feminine characteristics of our soul.	The Christian faith is more God-generated than self-generated.
4	Not feeling very close to God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	God also communicates his love visually.	Visualize God's Father-Son love and contemplate on the images of this love.	Feeling closer to God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

5	Experiencing the Christian faith more as a private relationship than a public one.	Christians are called to move or dance with Trinity and inhabit and permeate the different spheres of life as the Persons of the Trinity inhabit and permeate one another.	Learning to move or dance with the Trinity by intentionally beholding and contemplating the multi-faceted sceneries of God's Trinitarian love with the eyes of our hearts	Experiencing the Christian faith more as a public relationship.
6	Experiencing the Christian faith to be about right beliefs and right conduct.	The Christian faith is about growing in discovering what it means to live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	Develop an initiation culture of personal experience within the community of faith.	Experiencing the Christian faith to be about discovering what it means to live embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit
7	Experiencing the hope the Christian faith has to offer this world makes little difference in the day-to-day affairs of this world because this hope is primarily about forgiveness of sins.	The hope of the gospel for the world includes not only forgiveness of sins, but also setting up tangible signs of the enduring, eschatological kingdom of God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Remembering that the church represents Jesus to the world. Thus, our gentleness is Jesus' gentleness, our understanding his understanding, our words his words, our face his face.	Offering the world the hope of the presence of Jesus Christ by setting up tangible signs of the enduring, eschatological kingdom of God through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

8	Living dis-embedded from God because faith is too objective by placing more emphasis on what Christ did <i>for</i> us than on what He does <i>in</i> us.	The mystery of the gospel is living in Christ and Christ living embedded in us through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit	Remembering that moralism or self generated living is a way of life that does not need God.	Living embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit by placing just as much emphasis on what Christ does <i>in</i> us as on what He did <i>for</i> us.
9	Not daily praying to be filled with the Holy Spirit because one may not be very receptive to and expectant of the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Conformity to Christ not only means that Christ is the pattern of our conformity, but also its source through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Praying continually or being online with God 24 hours a day (also known as listening prayer).	Christ being the source of our conformity to Him by daily praying to be filled with his Spirit and experiencing his generating and transforming work.
10	Experiencing restlessness in the Christian life because the starting point of our Christian life may be characterized more by doing than resting with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	The starting point of the Christian life is resting with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.	Practising the presence of God through having an interactive, conversational relationship with Him.	Experiencing rest in the Christian life by practising the presence of God so that doing flows from being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit

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