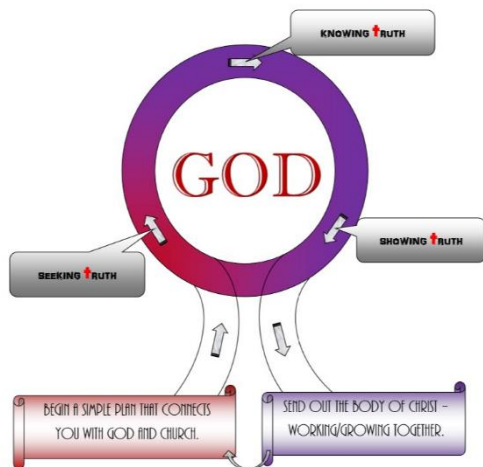


SOUL RETENTION

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE REAL WORLD



By; Rev. Tom Hazelwood

THE DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY

We are all on a Journey. When we accepted Christ into our lives we decided to be partakers of “The Way”.

The thought of Soul Retention came about when God revealed to me a need in the church today. Through a discussion with Prof. Karl Westfall , several pastors and people of the church, I was shown that the church needs another avenue to help believers become partakers in “The Way” instead of just becoming pew warmers.

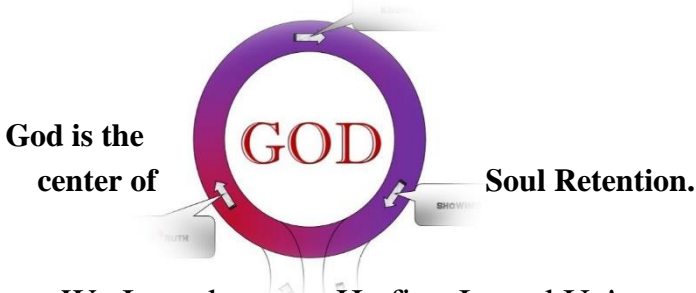
Too many of us come to church to sit for a sermon, sing songs of praise and superficially visit with others of the church only to go back to our busy lives and lose that connection with God and others.

What is Soul Retention? Well, Retention is the act of keeping something... a preservation of the aftereffects of experience and learning that makes recall or recognition possible. We need our eternal Soul to abide with Jesus Christ, to remain in His presence. We need Soul Retention!

Soul Retention is a simple systematic plan laid out in a step by step format that is flexible but fixed. While it allows for creativity it also keeps you focused on the prize. We will talk about the prize later on in this booklet.

The Beginning

The Beginning of relationship Begins with God.



When we first come to Christ and allow Him into our lives there is an excitement that fills you. That excitement could be eternal but begins to fade because of worldly thoughts and connections. Even if you have been a Christian for a long time you may still have doubts, questions, struggles, things of the world pulling you in all directions.

We all wonder about what truth is and can be torn away from God by the father of lies, who is Satan, or be drawn closer to the Father of the universe through the Holy Spirit.

The Beginning

When starting up Soul Retention be sure to choose the Servant Leader wisely through prayer, observation, counsel & common sense.

Jesus said to Peter three times “do you love Me?” followed by “feed My lambs”, “tend My sheep”, “feed My sheep”. As shepherds or the lamb with the loud bell (as once told to me by a wonderful pastor years ago) we love Jesus Christ, we love the church, we need to insure that Christ’s lambs are being tended to in a godly manner and not lead astray.

The person who leads this weekly gathering should be grounded in their faith, well-versed in the word of God, they need to study in depth about the topics that are being brought to the gathering to insure that they are ready for open discussion, Quick to Listen, Slow to Speak, Continually in Prayer; someone who knows the time to say “let me look into this further” to discuss it during the next gathering; a Servant Leader.

If another is chosen to lead Soul Retention, be sure to participate (if able) to help with group discussions, make connections and show the importance of weekly discipleship.

The Backbone

Jesus Christ is the backbone of Soul Retention. He is the Head of the Church, the Word that became flesh, the Alpha and the Omega. Jesus is God.

When you begin this discipleship journey whether you are new to “The Way” or have been walking with God for years, you come to a place where you are **Seeking Truth**... this is the entry position of Soul Retention.

But if our gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine to them.

2 Corinthians 4:3,4 (Webster)

εὐαγγέλιον *Euaggelion* (yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on); (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance)
Word Origin: Greek, Noun Neuter from the same as (2097)

1. good tidings

- a. the glad tidings of the kingdom of God soon to be set up, and subsequently also of Jesus the Messiah, the founder of this kingdom. After the death of Christ, the term comprises also the preaching of (concerning) Jesus Christ as having suffered death on the cross to procure eternal salvation for the men in the kingdom of God, but as restored to life and exalted to the right hand of God in heaven, thence to return in majesty to consummate the kingdom of God
- b. the glad tidings of salvation through Christ
- c. the proclamation of the grace of God manifest and pledged in Christ
- d. the gospel

as the messianic rank of Jesus was proved by his words, his deeds, and his death, the narrative of the sayings, deeds, and death of Jesus Christ came to be called the gospel or glad tidings

The Backbone

Jesus Christ is the Gospel, the Good Tidings, He is the Cornerstone of our faith. Jesus is the backbone of Soul Retention.

We cannot lose track of where we began. We must build on the saving Grace of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is the beginning and where we return to in this cycle of Soul Retention.

Paul gives us a thought to consider when he was addressing baptism:

For Christ hath not sent me to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but to us who are saved, it is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1:17, 18 (Webster)

The cross of Christ has to remain our priority. You will see how the cycle of Soul Retention returns to the basics of our relationship with God. The latter part of this scripture shows us that to some it will be foolishness, but to those who are saved, it is the power of God. Remember the Backbone, our Priority, the Beginning of our walk in **Seeking Truth**.

Constants In Each Truth

There are 3 sections to this Journey:

Seeking Truth

Knowing Truth

Showing Truth

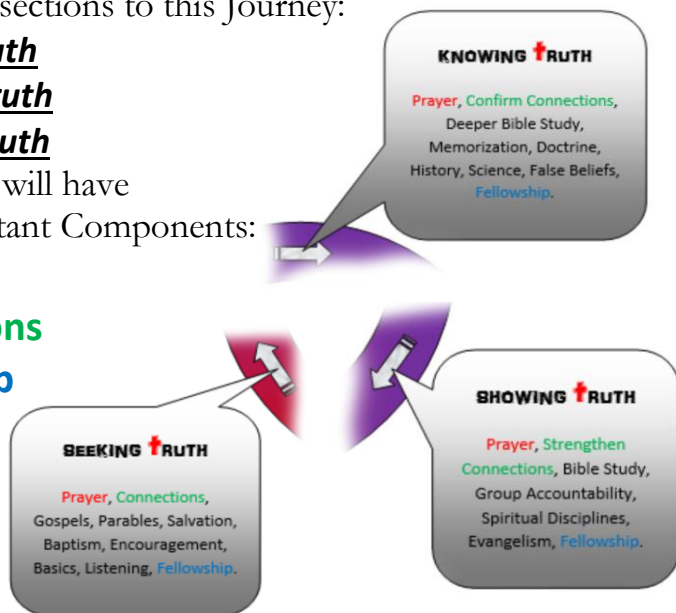
Every week will have

Three Constant Components:

Prayer

Connections

Fellowship



These consistent components will be a glue that draws the church together. They are the only reoccurring components in each section of Soul Retention.

Since they are consistent they become a part that is looked forward to by many and therefore builds relationships. In time, through Holy Spirit they cause a true *koinonia* to occur.

κοινωνία Koinonia (koy-nohn-ee'-ah); (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance)

Word Origin: Greek, Noun Feminine
from (2844)

1. fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation
 - a. the share which one has in anything, participation

Constants In Each Truth

Prayer

Prayer- is our way of communicating with God. It is adoration, a way to give thanks, to come to God on behalf of others.

We open the journey with prayer asking for Holy Spirit to guide us and give understanding. Then begin with a verse about prayer.

Prayer is mentioned 131 times in KJV, so it should be easy to find a verse with the word 'prayer' or one that pertains to prayer- this can even turn into a Bible study.

When we stay constant in this core value it will show others its importance through action and scripture.

Continuing earnestly in prayer is expected- but many are like the disciples wondering how to pray. For this reason this needs to be addressed each week to reveal instances that God gives us in His word. Scripture and action will fortify this discipline in our lives.

**Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation;
continuing earnest in prayer;
Romans 12:12 (Webster)**

Prayer is an essential piece in our walk with God.

Never forsake a chat with the Almighty!

Constants In Each Truth

Connections

Connections – are a vital part of our walk with God... when you are connected with brothers and sisters in Christ your relationship with God is strengthened.

Connections are a fun but revealing time of Soul Retention. It becomes an avenue that leads us into praying for each other through the week. Creativity can make this exercise fun, yet cause connections to form between people.

There are three types of Connections:

Connections- during **Seeking Truth** this is a basic connection method that will reveal something about a person.

***Example:** Have each person say their name and favorite dessert.*

Confirm Connections- during **Knowing Truth** this is a way of confirming a connection with someone in the group.

Example:

- *Have small pieces of paper cut to the same size and pass out to each person with a pencil.*
- *Have each person draw a self-portrait.*

Constants In Each Truth

Connections

- *Collect all of the papers and pass them out to everyone. Insure that no one gets their own paper back.*
- *Then have each person guess who it is. Whether the individual can guess or not show the group- see if they can guess.*
- *Once the self-portrait is revealed have the person that has the paper write down the revealed persons' name on the paper.*
- *When all are revealed, instruct everyone to go to their connection and write down their phone# and find out a day and time they can call during the week.*
- *Instruct everyone to pray for the person written on their paper through the week and to call them just to say that they have been praying for them. This simple action gives people a confirmation that they are cared for and is a great way to confirm a connection with others "Of The Way".*

Constants On Each Truth

Connections

Strengthen Connections- during **Showing Truth** this is a way to strengthen the connections that have already begun.

- *Starting in 2019 We started an old Wesley Class Meeting type Connection*

I would start by saying:

"We are going to have Group Testimony & Accountability: If someone has something they want to say in front of this group of believers... this is the time. John Wesley encouraged group accountability... nothing too personal... but if there is something you need to speak of- a struggle or an issue that you can bring before a group- this type of confession strengthens your spirit. It doesn't have to be accountability, it can also be a God sighting or testimony that can bring encouragement."

- *I also have encouraged Wesley Band Type gatherings with just women or men for deeper connections and accountability.*
- *e.g. "Women of Faith" or "Men of The Way"*

This has really opened up connections between the brothers and sisters in Christ at our church. Prayer, encouragement, admonishment, discipling, trust and many other connections, have grown from this Connection Time during Showing Truth weeks.

Constants In Each Truth

Connections

Remember that these are just examples that have been used. If someone comes for the first time, open up with a simple connection of name and favorite “_____”. Then feel free to have another type of connection with them.

Connections can relate to the lesson: when you are contemplating one- be in prayer about it, ask for guidance and that the Holy Spirit will move during connection time.

One awesome God sighting during a connection time was when I had prepared a lesson that spoke of casting lots. I had been in prayer over what type of connection God wanted and was given the thought of having everyone draw lots... well, in this case it was straws. I continued in prayer about how this would work out and a thought came the following day to write on the straw “I need prayer”. Let me first say- God is awesome!!! Everyone had drawn a lot and I asked if anyone had anything written on their straw. The one person that had it said “I do”, I asked “what does it say” and she said “I need prayer” I called her by name and asked “what do you need prayer for?” First there was a pause and a confused look and she asked “what?” I repeated her name and asked “what do you need prayer for?” tears welled up in her eyes and she began to tell us a struggle she was dealing with. This connection I asked everyone to pray for her and the struggle she mentioned through the week.

Constants In Each Truth

Connections

Be creative, be prayerful, be consistent with connections. Connections can be different just be sure they are a Constant each week.

Connections are an essential piece
in our walk with God.

Never forsake connections with the
Almighty & others of “The Way”!

Fellowship

Fellowship — is more than just social, it is joint participation in our walk with God. Koinonia is the fellowship we desire, understanding that we are all part of the Body of Christ and have a share in the inheritance. Koinonia is vital to our relationship with God.

Fellowship ends each gathering in Soul Retention.

A time of **reflection**.

A time to bring up **questions** that have surfaced from the discussion.

A time to discuss the **charge** made during the lesson.

A time to have **fun** playing a game that reviews the lesson in a fun way.

Constants In Each Truth

Fellowship

Fellowship Reflection brings out views of others that may help us rethink our views.

Fellowship Questions are a great way to get answers you have been seeking from a counsel of believers.

Fellowship Charge is given to us by God and when discussed it insures that we are all given a charge as the Body of Christ.

Fellowship In Action working together as an outreach. We have at times went out to evangelize during the Showing Truth Sunday.

Fellowship Fun yes, fellowship can be fun and is a great way to draw closer to each other while seating the lesson into your heart.

Fellowship Praises our God who is worthy of praise.

We need godly counsel, accountability, friendship, people who will listen, people who will say what needs to be said in a loving way, someone who not only listens but will stand by you.

We need to have koinonia; true fellowship. To walk with others of “The Way” keeps us going the right way.

Wide is the path to destruction and many go that route... it is easy to find friendship in this route of the world. But we have the opportunity to walk with those down the narrow path.

Constants In Each Truth

Fellowship

I was told by a professor during a course on Church Management that his father told him the best and the worst thing about the church is people. This is true. We live in a messed up world with messed up people. Just look at many of the people in the Bible.

Think about it; Samson had anger issues, David, a man after God's heart, fell away from God having Uriah killed after committing adultery with his wife, Solomon had problems with women and idolatry, Jonah ran the other way from God, there were many messed up people in the Old Testament... but it didn't stop there, it continued into the New Testament.

We do see how fellowship helped with those straying from "The Way", like, when Paul, someone who used to persecute believers, rebuked a pillar of the church, Peter, for not treating Gentiles the same way when Jews were present. How about when Apollos, an eloquent man, who, mighty in the scriptures, spoke boldly of "The Way" knowing only the baptism of John... When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. This is fellowship, koinonia, working together as the Body of Christ.

Constants In Each Truth

Fellowship

There is one difference between a friend that is of the world and a friend of “The Way” - **Jesus Christ**. Even though we may be just as bad as or worse than people of the world, as people of “The Way”, we yearn to draw closer to God, and to build our relationship with the Almighty. Walking with others who focus on the prize helps keep us on the narrow path. When you surround yourself with other Christians and begin to stray, they are there to bump you back in line. They lend the helping hand that can pull you back in.

Whether you are reflecting with others, bringing up questions, considering the charge, working together for the Great Commission or having fun by playing a game of Bible Jenga or Bible Pictionary at the end of Soul Retention, realize that Fellowship is an important part of Soul Retention.

Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Romans 12:9-11 (Webster)

Constants In Each Truth

Fellowship

Fellowship is an essential piece
of our walk with God.

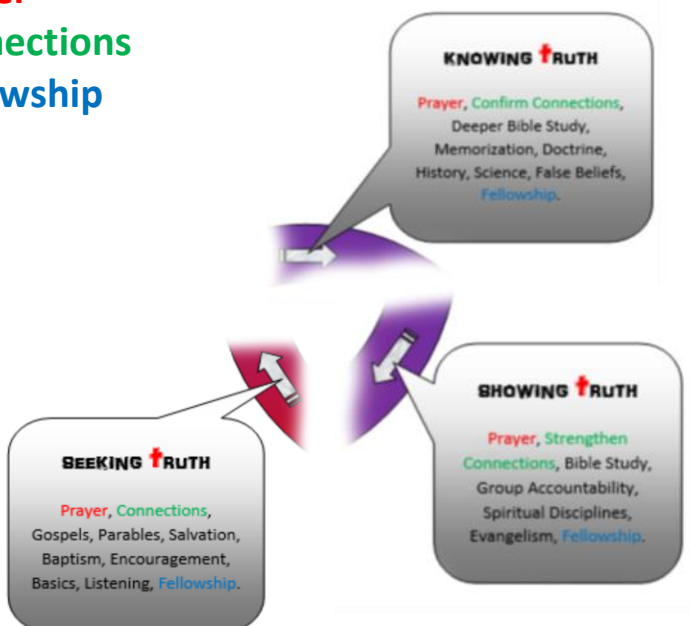
Never forsake fellowship with the
Almighty & others of “The Way”!

Remember to keep these Constants In Each Truth;
Keeping God in the center and utilizing these three
constants will draw your group together in Christ.

Prayer

Connections

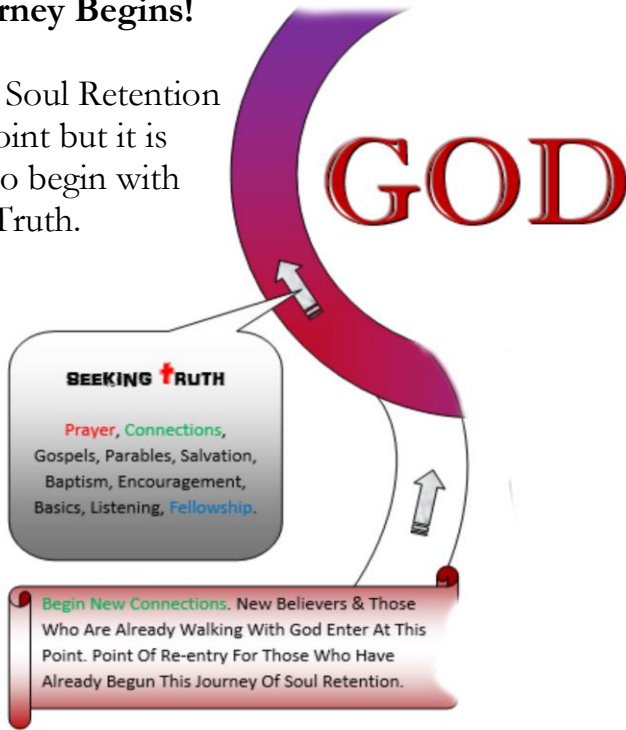
Fellowship



SEEKING TRUTH

The Journey Begins!

You join Soul Retention at any point but it is optimal to begin with Seeking Truth.



Someone has just accepted Christ into their heart. They have tasted the sweet milk of salvation.

As new-born babes, desire the pure milk of the word that ye may grow thereby: If indeed ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

1Peter 2:2,3 (Webster)

SEEKING TRUTH

We cannot let the relationship stop there. Many are brought to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, but are left yearning for more of that sweet milk.

If not tended to, this new believer will gravitate towards anyone that will fill this new void. The excitement and change that has happened causes them to seek out truth. We need to be sure to connect them to a discipleship program as soon as possible for Soul Retention.

We know that the “constants” are part of each truth:

Prayer, **Connections** & **Fellowship**.

Soul Retention in regard to **Seeking Truth** focuses on other truths that are sought after:

You will not be able to teach them all each time you come together for **Seeking Truth** but these bring a multitude of lessons and ways to fellowship with God and church. Choosing one will usually suffice.

GOSPELS- The accounts of Christ in Matthew, Mark, Luke & John are a requirement in our walk with God and others of “The Way”.

SEEKING TRUTH

As a spark that is just beginning or flame that has burned for years we need to realize that the Gospels are where we need to begin and continue to return to so that we can build upon our relationship with God. We should never stop Seeking Truth. Jesus told us simply...

Jesus saith to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me. John 14:6 (Webster)

The Word became flesh, Jesus Christ incarnate was a great revealing of who God is. The Gospels are unending Truth that will show us who God is and strengthen our relationship with Him.

**Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching for this purpose with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.
Ephesians 6:18-20 (Webster)**

SEEKING TRUTH

How are we to speak boldly of the Gospel if we do not understand it? We all need to be reminded of the Good News and need to be ready to show an account of our hope.

PARABLES- Through **parables** Christ shows us relational stories that can help us relate to things of the kingdom. These **parables** show us His ways and bring to light things that are not His ways.

משל *Mashal* (maw-shawl'); (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance)

Word Origin: Hebrew, Noun Masculine

apparently from (04910) in some original sense of superiority in mental action

1. proverb, **parable**
 - a. **proverb, proverbial saying, aphorism**
 - b. byword
 - c. **similitude, parable**
 - d. poem

sentences of ethical wisdom, ethical maxims

SEEKING TRUTH

παραβολεύομαι *Parabole* (par-ab-ol-ay'); (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance)

Word Origin: Greek, Noun Feminine
from (3846)

1. a placing of one thing by the side of another, juxtaposition, as of ships in battle
2. **metaph.**
 - a. a comparing, comparison of one thing with another, likeness, similitude
 - b. an example by which a doctrine or precept is illustrated
 - c. a narrative, fictitious but agreeable to the laws and usages of human life, by which either the duties of men or the things of God, particularly the nature and history of God's kingdom are figuratively portrayed
 - d. a parable: an earthly story with a heavenly meaning
3. a pithy and instructive saying, involving some likeness or comparison and having preceptive or admonitory force
 - a. an aphorism, a maxim
4. a proverb
an act by which one exposes himself or his possessions to danger, a venture, a risk

The parables of Jesus Christ can be confusing. Many do not even know what “parable” means. To many, the parable becomes a riddle. With the right heart it causes people to seek the truth behind it. With the wrong heart it causes people to take it at face value and not see the spirit of the word.

And with many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it.

Mark 4:33 (Webster)

SEEKING TRUTH

How were the disciples able to hear the word and understand its meaning? Easily- by having the right heart seeking for truth and by asking the Almighty to explain it to them.

Even though parables are expounded upon by Jesus in the Bible, many need additional direction when dissecting one and what better way than in a group of believers.

But without a parable he spoke not to them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

Mark 4:34 (Webster)

Don't let it get to the point where someone is discerning the spirit of the word by themselves. Draw them into a group setting of others seeking truth. With the Holy Ghost - understanding will be given.

SALVATION- the basis of our relationship with God.

What is salvation? Some may have just been saved and do not fully understand what salvation is. To others, it may be something that has gone by the wayside, as they have traveled through the years.

SEEKING TRUTH

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ and helped people begin to understand what the New Testament would look like. This Christ, this Messiah would change our outlook on relationship with God.

And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation to his people, by the remission of their sins, Luke 1:76,77 (Webster)

In regard to Apollos, even though he was versed in the word, he did not know the full meaning of salvation. Priscilla and Aquila gave him the full meaning of the Gospel - Salvation was not just Baptism for the remission of sins, but Salvation was through Jesus.

JESUS CHRIST = 100% GOD & 100% MAN = SALVATION FOR MANKIND

What an awesome equation!!!

Christ died on the cross to redeem us; rose from the dead, and was the propitiation for the sin of all mankind. By Jesus becoming the ultimate sacrifice, the scapegoat that takes all sin away, we are able to once again see God face to face one day.

SEEKING TRUTH

Salvation is simple and God's people need to understand that it is simple.

But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Romans 10:8-10 (NKJV)

Is it that simple? YES!!! And others need to know this as a basis of their walk with God.

BAPTISM- baptism for the remission of sins and the baptism of the Holy Spirit are fundamental teachings that relate to our walk with God.

Knowing the beginnings and the background of baptism opens the door to a better understanding of what took place and the significance of baptism.

“What is baptism?” A question I posed in Sunday School after searching scripture with a group of teens.

SEEKING TRUTH

“Mr. Tom, it is the outward showing of an inward change.” Brian stated. Others in the class said- “It is a time when the Holy Spirit enters you through the laying on of hands.”

Can things be that simple? Yes! Jesus showed us that it is simple in all aspects when looking at the basics of salvation... It is simple, but it may not be easy. We need the Holy Spirit to guide us in this journey. We need others of “The Way” to walk with us on this narrow path.

ENCOURAGEMENT & BASICS- encouragement is needed by all of us. Basics are the simple truths of belief (Justification, Holiness, Sanctification, Trinity, Forgiveness, Redemption, The Articles of Religion from the Wesleyan Discipline, etc...) To give and receive encouragement is important in our walk with God and others.

This facet of **Seeking Truth** is not only given by others of “The Way”, it is also throughout scripture. Encouragement was given to Gideon- a fleece of wool on a threshold was a God-sighting and was God’s confirmation for Gideon.

SEEKING TRUTH

Moses was prompted by God and encouraged Joshua to lead Israel into the Promised Land.

For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Colossians 2:1-3 (NKJV)

Encouragement & Basics is knit together in love; it is the full assurance given to us through scripture & fellowship. It is understanding given by the Holy Spirit, a knowledge of the mystery of God. Knowing the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit reveals to us all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

We all need encouragement and this facet of Seeking Truth needs to be revisited to help us in our journey. Like I stated earlier... Jesus showed a simple way but that doesn't mean it will be easy. We need

SEEKING TRUTH

encouragement and basic truth to help us through those ups and downs.

LISTENING- to hear something with thoughtful attention, to give consideration. Being slow to speak and quick to listen is a trait we all need in regard to God and others of “The Way”.

Cease listening to instruction, my son, And you will stray from the words of knowledge.

Proverbs 19:27 (NKJV)

This passage out of Proverbs was some words of wisdom from Solomon to his son. It is one that should transcend to each and every one of us today. We tend to think of things only in relationship to our own bias.

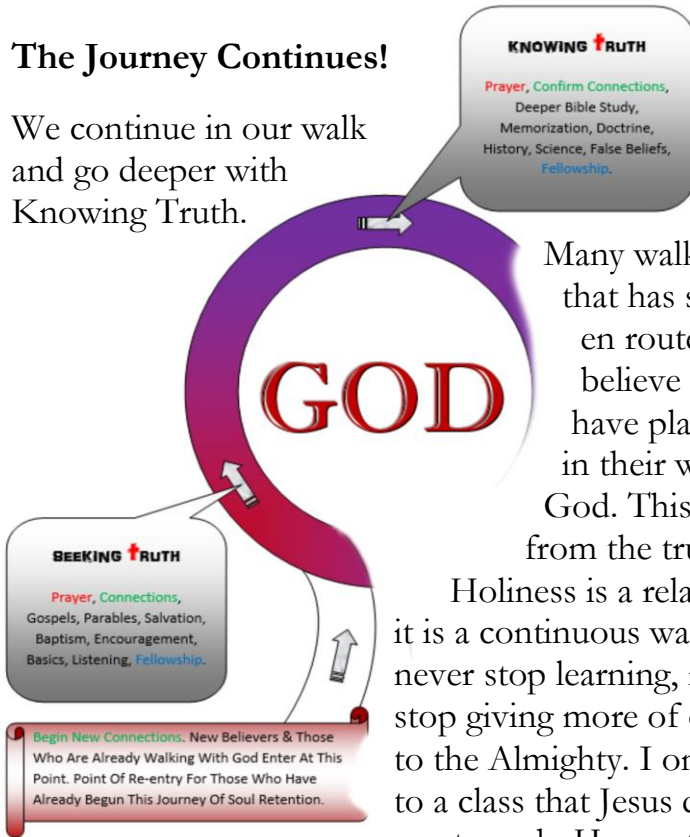
Listening is more than just hearing someone’s thoughts or hearing the spirit of God’s word. It is also stopping to listen for that still small voice of God Himself.

Listening can bring about several lessons that talk of this basic relationship builder with the Almighty and others of “The Way”.

KNOWING TRUTH

The Journey Continues!

We continue in our walk and go deeper with Knowing Truth.



Many walk a walk that has stopped en route. They believe that they have plateaued in their walk with God. This is far from the truth.

Holiness is a relationship; it is a continuous walk. We never stop learning, never stop giving more of our life to the Almighty. I once said to a class that Jesus doesn't want much, He wants it all.

Knowing Truth begins with the knowledge that God not only wants you to know His word, He wants you to live His word throughout your life. The Journey never plateaus, it continues on forever as we draw closer to God and others of "The Way".

Knowing Truth

We know that the “constants” are part of each truth:

Prayer, **Connections** & **Fellowship**.

Soul Retention in regard to **Knowing Truth** focuses on truths that are not normally taught in Sunday School or Bible Study:

Growing up as a Pastor’s kid (PK) I was taught the normal stories of the Bible- Noah’s flood, Samson’s strength, David & Goliath- the hallmarks of the Bible were taught consistently. I was well versed in the hallmarks but did not know that Noah, after the flood, became drunk and was seen in his nakedness by his son, Ham, who was the father of Canaan and was cursed by Noah. I did not know that Samson needed anger management courses and that he had tied 300 fox’s tails together with a lit torch to burn down the Philistines fields because he was angry about how his father-in-law giving away his wife to a companion... which in turn caused the father-in-law and wife to be burned. I did not know that David, a man after God’s own heart, was an adulterer and a murderer because of his own sinful desires.

KNOWING TRUTH

Boy, Pastor Tom those aren't very nice stories, I kind of want to remember the Bible heroes by their good traits. I want to know the good people in the Bible and reflect upon them.

Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

Matthew 19:16, 17 (NKJV)

ἀγαθός *Agathos* (ag-ath-os'); (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance)

Word Origin: Greek, Adjective
a primary word

1. of good constitution or nature
2. useful, salutary
3. good, pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy
4. excellent, distinguished

upright, honourable

Jesus was saying here to this young man that all but God are sinners. There is none good but God Himself.

Knowing Truth

Once we begin to understand that the people in the Bible were just like us, we begin to understand that in our weakness God is glorified. God gives us and these Bible heroes the strength to overcome and walk with Him.

Knowing Truth also shows other aspects in discipleship for our world today that are not taught regularly in churches. **Doctrine, History, Science & False Beliefs** are not a requirement for one's faith but are an icing on the cake of faith. I have faith because of God showing Himself throughout His creation and my life itself. So, when I find out that History & Science show evidence of God, it just adds that icing to the top.

You will not be able to teach them all each time you come together for **Knowing Truth**, but these bring a multitude of lessons and ways to fellowship with God and church. Choosing one will usually suffice.

DEEPER BIBLE STUDY- We may see this with our standard Bible study on Wednesday Night or Sunday School but this is needed in Soul Retention. We cannot stay with the milk of the word our whole walk

KNOWING TRUTH

with God; we need meat to satisfy that hunger we have for God.

Deeper Bible Study is the study of the Bible in context of the culture and society of the day when it happened. It is understanding the Hebrew and Greek words used and how they related to the people of the day. Knowing the phrases or catch phrases of the day and what they were used for can help in determining what the context of the scripture was speaking too.

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Hebrews 5:12-14 (NKJV)

Knowing Truth is purposefully once every 3rd week so that we are ready for the solid food. It follows the milk of the word which is given in **Seeking Truth**.

KNOWING TRUTH

It is like when you are weaning a child from the bottle or breast- you begin in small amounts and use ground up food. With our children we began by adding rice cereal then oatmeal to the bottle so that they would not throw it back up. In the same way we need to be patient but also persistent in continuing the walk into the meat of the word. We cannot stay with the milk but we do not want to stuff a rib eye down anyone's throat unless they are ready for it. You will see that this silly concept not only goes for **Deeper Bible Study** but also the other aspects of **Knowing Truth**.

HEART VERSES- This is somewhat a constant. It begins in Knowing Truth but is alluded to in each of the Truths. Having God's word in your heart is very important to someone's relationship with God and others.

Heart Verses are more than just memorizing random scripture. When I was a young boy I had memorized several scripture; none of which stayed with me as I grew older. During this part of Knowing Truth you not only are given a heart verse or verses but you study the context in which it was written, not only

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knowing the whole of the scripture it was written in but knowing the thought behind the scripture. Some scripture may have a few main thoughts. This is a great way to have group discussion. After reading ask the group what they believe the main thought was. Write it on a white board. Give the main thoughts you found while studying for this lesson. When you know the thought and context of a verse: when you not only memorize it but implement a verse in your life: it is easier to keep it close to your heart and it reveals itself to you in trials and in good times.

Heart Verses are an essential part to our walk with God & others. In the other parts of **Soul Retention**, (Seeking Truth & Showing Truth) be sure to bring up a reminder of the verse; not only the verse itself but also the context and main thought it was written in.

I have even used a fun way to make participation plentiful. Having children to elderly ages in this group, you can have a contest to reward those who actively memorize God's word. Of course, the real reward is God's word becoming part of you and your life, but this is a fun way to encourage people's efforts as they memorize and take a verse to heart.

KNOWING TRUTH

The Quarterly Can Of Conscience Contest is a can that you can put a ticket in during **Knowing Truth** if you have memorized the verse that was given. If you know the main thought or context it was written in you can put in two tickets with your name on them. There is another avenue of reward- I have a box of small gifts that you can choose from instead of putting a ticket in the **Quarterly Can Of Conscience Contest**. Once every three months there is a drawing and a larger gift is given away. i.e. (Study Bible, Study Book, MP3 player with scripture on it) Try to relate the gift to God. And yes- the first time you attend **Knowing Truth** and hear of this contest, if you say **“Quarterly Can Of Conscience Contest”** 5 times, fast, within 10 seconds, you get a ticket. **Heart Verses** can be fun but is also something we can call upon when in need. We need to encourage the memorization and implementation of God’s word in our lives.

"But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Matthew 13:23 (NKJV)

KNOWING TRUTH

Just like with the parable of the sower. The word of the kingdom can be snatched away. We need to have good soil. When we hear and understand through Holy Spirit it will produce fruit to the glory of God.

DOCTRINE- means to teach, a doctrine can be true or false, it may be a mere tenet or opinion. But doctrine does matter and needs to be understood.

Doctrine is the tenets of belief that we have in regard to the Bible. The Wesleyan Church lays out its doctrine in the Discipline (a book of beliefs and standards that the church adheres to). Different denominations have varying doctrines and when teaching this part of **Knowing Truth** we need to be sure to speak of the difference between doctrine and dogma.

Dogma: (**Merriam-Webster**) something held as an established opinion, a definite authoritative tenet, a doctrine or body of doctrines concerning faith or morals formally stated and authoritatively proclaimed by a church

Some examples of dogma are the “Apostle’s Creed” or the “Nicene Creed”. Many denominations hold to

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these beliefs and any beliefs that contradict these creeds are false beliefs in regard to Christianity.

Years ago we had a denomination that needed to use our church until they could get established again. During this time I was a Vice Chairman and was asked if we should allow this church to use our facilities. I said that this group believes in the same dogma as us and is part of the family of God. We accepted our brothers and sisters in with love until they were able to move into their new location.

Doctrine does matter... and should be taught. The basic tenants of Christianity found in the creeds mentioned earlier do however, trump doctrine.

As a Wesleyan Pastor and from research I have delved into on my own, I believe that the doctrine laid out in the Wesleyan Discipline holds true to what I have found in the Bible.

Doctrine should be shown in the context of the Bible as a whole. Using random verses can show your point, but, using a multitude of verses in the context of when it was written will prove to be helpful in understanding doctrine.

KNOWING TRUTH

People who attend a church should know the doctrine of the body that they are involved with. Teaching doctrine opens up dialog and helps with the understanding of God's word.

HISTORY- history is an important part of Knowing Truth, it gives the background of what was happening in the time scripture was written. As the future unfolds, history is showing the validity and truth of God's word.

History is, however, shown on television in a way to desecrate or weaken the validity of Christ. A show that aired on Christmas day and ran throughout the day was talking about Jesus and how Jesus was a follower of John the Baptist... and since John the Baptist was changing the world- Jesus being a follower of John was encouraged to continue this change... One BIG problem with these thoughts- **THEY ARE FALSE!!!** John the Baptist was a follower of Jesus. He was the forerunner of Christ and did not even think he was worthy to baptize Jesus. Jesus was not wanting to just change the world. He came to be the propitiation for

Knowing Truth

our sin. He was 100% God & 100% man. God incarnate. He wasn't just a person trying to turn the political table of the day. He was God on earth and came to redeem His people from the fall of Adam.

History is so important in **Knowing Truth** because people are fed falsehoods as fact and are barraged with information that many times they do not validate. When speaking of historical facts, be sure to have references so that the group can have them. This can also be a time to challenge things that are shown as fact on television.

History is not only Bible sources but also secular writings that validate Christianity. It will be helpful to fully study writings before teaching, knowing the dates when they were written and the background of the writer. When secular writings are used with the background shown in regard to the writing, it in turn makes a case for the validity of the writing and will be used by your group in future discussion with others. Looking up writings from Flavius Josephus, Pliny the Younger or Cornelius Tacitus will make the **History** part of **Knowing Truth** exciting and revealing to the group.

KNOWING TRUTH

History also shows us where the Bible as we know it came from. It is a good idea to split up certain lessons into two or three **Knowing Truth** occurrences, with a recap of the previous lessons before beginning the new part of the lesson. **History** gives us facts that make learning fun; during one lesson we were talking of the Bible that came over to the new found land with the pilgrims... the Geneva Bible also known as the ‘Breeches Bible’ because of how it rendered this verse:

‘Then the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig tree leaves together, and made themselves breeches.’ Genesis 3:7 (Breeches Bible)

History has many avenues that can be followed. Just be sure to get the facts straight before implementing a lesson. God is the beginning and the end and everywhere in between, so no matter where you go with **History**, God will be there.

SCIENCE- is the state of knowing, it is also a knowledge or a system of knowledge that covers general truths or the operation of general laws-

KNOWING TRUTH

these are found and tested through scientific method.

Science like History, is also shown on television in a way to demean or weaken the validity of Christ. Christians are sometimes called “flat earthers”, they say that science shows otherwise in regard to a Creator and there are many scientists that back evolution and have theories that show that there is no God. “God is Dead” they proclaim. There is another group of scientists, be it small they are growing in ranks. I will quote a song by the News Boys; “God’s Not Dead, He Is Surely Alive, He’s Living On The Inside, Roaring Like A Lion”. And He is!

There are many prominent scientists, professors, and people who carry all those letters after their names and believe in an Almighty God; a Creator of the universe. They, too, have theories and facts that back up their belief in creation. People like John C. Lennox MA PhD DPhil DSc, he is a Professor in Mathematics at the University of Oxford and Fellow in Mathematics and the Philosophy of Science at Green Templeton College. This Christian has debated Richard Dawkins and

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Christopher Hitchens – two of the most prominent atheists in the world. Lennox wrote a book in 2007 called “God’s Undertaker Has Science Buried God?” This book does show that science has not buried God, but debate and theories have been silenced due to the belief system of naturalists & atheists. But, why would people silence a theory or debate of creation when there were towering figures of science that were theists: Galileo, Kepler, Newton, & Kelvin. These scientists and even Francis Bacon, who was considered to be the father of modern science, were from the 1500’s-1900’s. They often were inspired by God in relation to science and said openly that God was the driving force.

In regard to Creationists/Christians being ‘flat earthers’, let’s go to scripture and see what it tells us about the earth’s shape.

It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.
Isaiah 40:22 (NKJV)

Knowing Truth

Isaiah spoke of, ‘God who sits above the circle of the earth...’ He didn’t say that God was above a flat mass. Maybe Christians aren’t ‘flat earthers’ after all.

Science is very important in **Knowing** Truth. Just like History, people are fed falsehoods as fact and are barraged with information that many times they do not validate. When speaking of scientific facts, be sure to have references, so that the group can have them. This can also be a time to challenge things that are shown as fact in school or on television.

Here is an example: many see fossils as very old, many believe that fossils are millions of years old, but many people do not know that there are many fossils that are not old at all, like a boot with a fossilized foot in it, the boot itself dates to the 1950’s. The bones of the partial leg and foot within the boot were revealed by C.T. scans performed at Harris Methodist Hospital in Bedford, Texas, on July 24, 1997. The Radiologic Technician was Evelyn Americus, AART. You can see a complete set of these scans at the Creation Evidence Museum in Glen Rose, Texas. One more is a T-Rex Bone found to have soft tissue and containing red blood cells in 2005, by Dr. Mary Schweitzer.

KNOWING TRUTH

This dinosaur bone dated to be 68 million years old somehow held on to soft tissue and blood cells. Hmm... well now Dr. Schweitzer is trying to say that the tissue etc. were preserved with iron. One thing to consider is a catastrophic flood that buries things instantly. This could cause preservation which has been shown with sandstone. Well, I can recall a flood, and it was catastrophic, and written about in the Holy Bible. These are just a few examples of an avalanche of facts that support creation.

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.

Psalm 19:1 (NKJV)

Science also has many avenues that can be followed. Just be sure to get the facts straight before implementing a lesson. Just as Psalm 19:1 states “the heavens declare the glory of God.” God was the creator of the laws of science and is shown in even the most basic thought of creation. A child can win a debate with an atheist by just asking “where did everything come from?”

Knowing Truth

FALSE BELIEFS- there are many religions in the world today. But the relationship with God is diminishing as pluralism and culture introduce new false beliefs into our world view. What makes a Belief System false? It may not be a full about face in belief. The great Deceiver only wants you to have a little piece of a lie. Little lies and small changes in your foundational belief will tear you away from God. In some cases, it may make you fall off a cliff. But, most of the time, Satan is subtle in his efforts to slowly drag you down; changing your view of truth slowly is one of the keys that Satan uses to separate us from God. Any key will do in his effort of locking up our souls in the end.

False Beliefs are very relevant and needed in **Knowing Truth**. It is a way of revealing the keys that are used day to day, month to month, generation to generation. An analogy is made between Satan's plan and a murder case that was shown during a forensics show: A woman was slowly poisoning her husband over a long span of time, he would get sick off and on, but he built up a tolerance to the cyanide she was putting in his lunch every day.

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She ended up having to put such a large amount in his food to kill him that the forensics team found it very easily and were astounded by the amount he had been given over the long period of time. Satan poisons us this way - over generations we are slowly desensitized to the evil in our world. Since the beginning with the fall of Adam our world has been spiraling into chaos.

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. Matthew 7:13-15 (NKJV)

There is hope though, the old man has been buried with Christ and the new man has been born again. We have been raised from the grave as a new creation. The ability to see truth with Holy Spirit is possible.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)

KNOWING TRUTH

False Beliefs have a vast selection to choose from. Satan's been working very hard to lie to everyone. This topic can range from the false belief of a whole religion like Wicca, Jehovah Witness, Atheism, Islam & Universalism to a single sin that is being portrayed as ok - like abortion, homosexuality, gluttony & coveting to a false statement that is trending on You Tube or posted on several walls of Facebook. False beliefs are everywhere. They are blatant lies in magazines pushing their agenda with a bias someone holds while writing an article.

Be sure to do your research when looking into a belief system, look to the founder of the religion, look for written facts that pertain to the topic, and be sure to have references so that people can use them in the future. Pray for guidance and revelation through Holy Spirit. God will direct you to facts that shed light and reveal what is in the darkness.

**Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men;
and the weakness of God is stronger than men.**

1 Corinthians 1:25 (Webster)

SHOWING TRUTH

We Have Come To The End Of The Cycle?

This is not the end but the beginning, God is even more in the center of our walk, we are just to the point of showing truth in our every day lives.

This narrow road is a Journey that is among Brothers and Sisters in the Lord.



The “constants” that we have continued to visit during each truth are one of the foundations of **Showing Truth:**

Prayer, Connections & Fellowship.

Constants will help with keeping our focus on the prize.

SHOWING TRUTH

On page 1 I said: keeps you focused on the prize and that we would talk about the prize later on in this booklet.

What is the prize? During a meeting with the District Board of Ministerial Development they found out that the passion that has been laid on my heart was discipleship. I was asked “what is discipleship?” My answer created a few confused looks around the room. I said: “discipleship is relationship”. Let me explain; when we come together in prayer, fellowship and make connections with each other in Christ’s name. We are strengthening our connection with God. Our relationship builds, walls are taken down that have blocked our view of who God is.

What is our prize? The prize is our relationship with God. It is Holiness. It is Entire Sanctification. Or in today’s terms it is Spiritual Formation. Like I said Showing Truth is not the end of the cycle it is the beginning, just like every day we walk with God is a new beginning, it never plateaus.

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Entire Sanctification is just the realization of giving yourself Entirely to God knowing that Holy Spirit Sanctifies.

It is the ultimate environment for **Soul Retention**.

Soul Retention in regard to **Showing Truth** focuses on truths that tear down the walls blocking our view of who God is. It helps us to walk in sync with Holy Spirit and also encourages the “Great Commission” that Jesus spoke of:

And Jesus came, and spoke to them, saying, All power is given to me in heaven and upon earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen.
Matthew 28:18-20 (Webster)

SHOWING TRUTH

BIBLE STUDY- is an important part of our lives continuing to do so in Showing Truth shows the importance of it in revealing God and encourages people to study abroad.

Before John Wycliffe the written word of God could not be read as a whole by the normal believer, you had to know Latin and have access to the scriptures. There were small writings that circulated but it wasn't until John Wycliffe began translating the Bible from the Latin Vulgate that a new epoch in Bible history opened up. This Bible was completed by Nicholas of Hereford. The Wycliffe Bible was the first English Bible and was widely circulated and revised. It was in the people's heart language. Many years went by but the hatred of people for Wycliffe's accomplishment in the Lord surfaced in 1415 – The Council of Constance condemned Wycliffe and his influence, they ordered to have his body exhumed, burned, and scattered his ashes on the River Swift. Maybe they should have read the Bible in their heart language; it would of saved them some time and they would not have done such a useless act as trying to condemn someone after they have already gone to see Jesus Christ.

SHOWING TRUTH

The famous beginning of St. John's Gospel should encourage us to continue in **Bible Study**:

In the bigynnyng was the word, and the word was at God, and God was the word.

Joon 1:1 (Wycliffe)

Bible Study is an important part of the revelation of God. It reveals Father God, His only Begotten Son Jesus Christ, & Holy Spirit.

As the Athanasian Creed states: "This is what the catholic faith teaches: we worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity. We distinguish among the persons, but we do not divide the substance."

How else can we discern who God is besides through His revealing by Holy Spirit and group Bible Study?

GROUP ACCOUNTABILITY- is needed in the Body of Christ today. In Showing Truth we always bring this Truth up. It is a Constant for Showing Truth.

SHOWING TRUTH

Group Accountability being one of the Constants - **Connections**; Is an open discussion format – if someone has something they want to say in front of a group of believers this is the time to do so. John Wesley encouraged group accountability. Now we are not talking about personal subjects that you would bring up to your accountability partner of the same gender or in a Wesley Band - which is a small group of the same gender that come together for accountability and encouragement. We are speaking of a struggle that someone is dealing with, an issue that can be brought before a group. Confession strengthens your spirit. It brings encouragement. This time is not only for accountability – it is also for a time of testimony, even a God sighting. This Truth draws people of “The Way” together.

Group Accountability through **Connections** is a time to tell others how God has touched you. It is a time of confession. A time of remorse, grace, mercy, excitement, it is a time to reflect on our walk with God and others.

SHOWING TRUTH

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES- are a way to encompass personal evangelism; what I mean by personal evangelism is that most think of evangelism as just the spreading of Christianity through activities to others. Personal evangelism is the spreading of Christianity throughout your own life. When we provide a wide range of Spiritual Disciplines they end up encircling our lives and become building blocks to our relationship with God.

Spiritual Discipline is a Truth that cleans the dirty mirror of your life so that others can see the light of Jesus more clearly in your actions, your character; they get a glimpse through Jesus' glasses. Your world view is shown to them in a real way not just by words.

Spiritual Discipline's are topics like “silence”, “rest”, “forgiveness”, “secrecy”, “penitence”, and many more. Keith Drury has written books that address many of these Spiritual Disciplines and give insight to practical ways of implementing them into your life.

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You will find that when these practical ways are brought up many more will be spoken of during this Truth. Others of “The Way” have personal experiences that will give more light on this much needed Truth in our lives.

EVANGELISM- we mentioned this earlier in regard to personal evangelism, this is also a group activity, being in the world but not of it is a way for people of “The Way” to show the reflection of Jesus Christ to others. Think of several mirrors facing different ways in a large grouping with the noonday sun and clear skies reflecting the bright light in all directions. Evangelism is others seeing the love of Christ shown in a gathering. How we act and react to each other and to strangers’ draw people in because they see the love of Christ and because this love is pure, it causes a yearning in their heart.

Evangelism also is technique with truth; this can be a time to learn of ways to speak with people in regard to the truth of salvation. The Gospel or Good News needs to be told and this can be a time to speak in a group setting about testimonies of

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showing the truth to others. With everything we should be in prayer and ask for guidance by Holy Spirit. Sometimes something as simple as speaking in a question type format with love is not known and will end up being utilized for kingdom building.

Evangelism doesn't just stop there. It is also mentoring a new Christian, encouraging other Christians in their walk with God; it is building great enthusiasm and fervor by showing great enthusiasm and fervor to others of "The Way".

This truth is one that promotes continuous connection with God and others while providing resources that may have not been made known otherwise. We are to Go and Make Disciple Makers!!! Showing Truth is finding ways to Make Disciple Makers out in your everyday life, through seed planting and teaching.

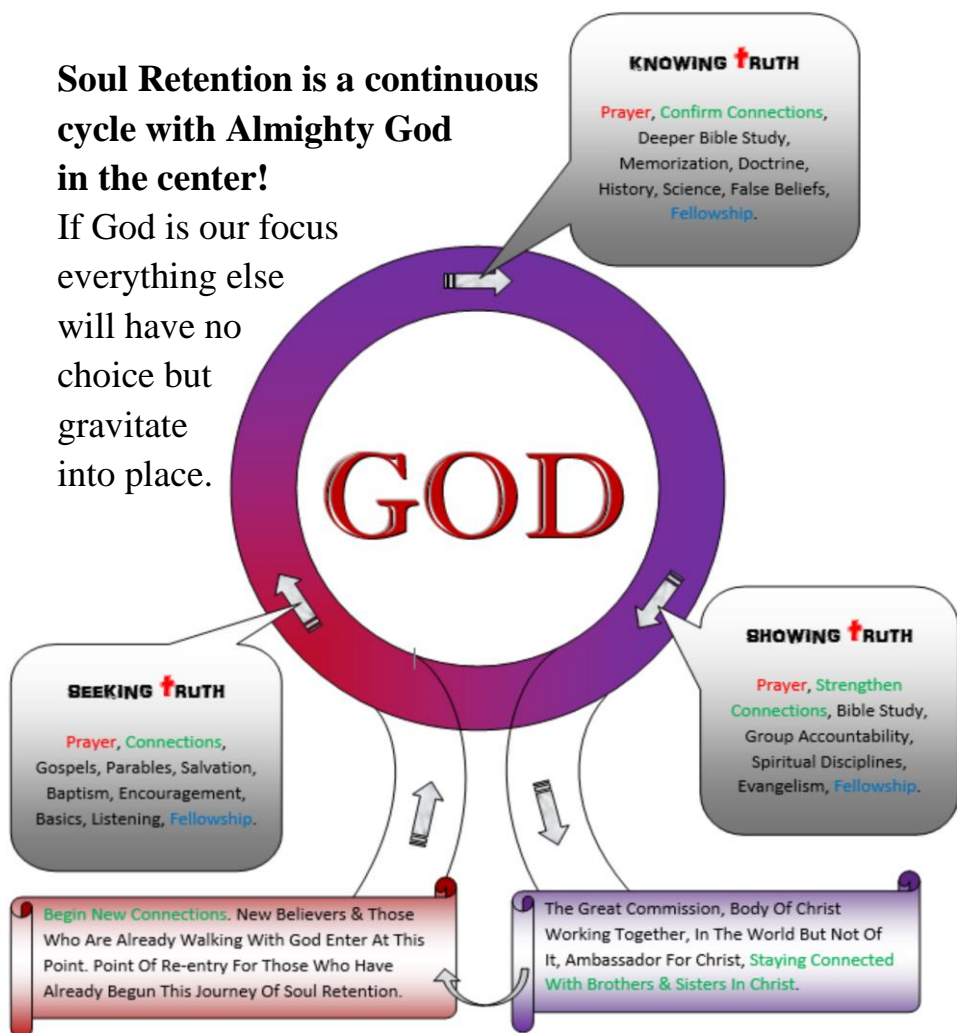
But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

2 Timothy 4:5 (NKJV)

THE DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY

Soul Retention is a continuous cycle with Almighty God in the center!

If God is our focus everything else will have no choice but gravitate into place.



This Journey is one that never ends, it is eternal.
There is freedom in having the truth of God in our lives. It is a love above all understanding.

TRUTH LAYOUT EXAMPLES

The following pages will show examples of layouts for each truth. It will show the categories and give references to pages describing them.

Many are used in lessons being provided for Sunday School, Bible Study, Even Sermons. These Layouts provide a systematic way to follow that promotes creativity. A lesson from the heart with the guidance of God Himself will prove to be the best route in Discipleship. When using other material for a lesson, be sure to dive in, do your own research to make it a lesson from the heart. It isn't easy but it is simple.

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

1 Peter 3:14-17 (NKJV)

†TRUTH LAYOUT EXAMPLES

SEEKING †TRUTHpages: 17-27

PRAYER: So let's pray.....page: 7

Heart Verse.....pages: 33-36

Connections-pages: 8-12

Choose one, or study a basic concept
(justification, sanctification, etc...)

Gospels:pages: 18-20

Parables: pages: 20-22

Salvation:pages: 22-24

Baptism:pages: 24-25

Encouragement & Basics:pages: 25-26

Listening:page: 27

FELLOWSHIP:pages: 12-16

TRUTH LAYOUT EXAMPLES

Knowing TRUTHpages: 28-47

PRAYER: So let's pray.....page: 7

Heart Verse.....pages: 33-36

Connections-pages: 8-12

Choose one or mix & match

Deeper Bible Study:pages: 31-33

Doctrine: pages: 36-38

History:pages: 38-40

Science:pages: 40-44

False Beliefs:pages: 45-47

FELLOWSHIP:pages: 12-16

TRUTH LAYOUT EXAMPLES

SHOWING TRUTH pages: 48-56

PRAYER: So let's pray.....page: 7

Heart Verse.....pages: 33-36

Connections-pages: 8-12

Group Accountability: pages: 52-53

Bible Study:pages: 51-52





Choose one or discuss ways of
making disciple makers

Spiritual Disciplines:pages: 54-55

Evangelism:pages: 55-56

FELLOWSHIP:pages: 12-16

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SOUL RETENTION

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE REAL WORLD

Can there be true discipleship in this world? Yes..!

Through Prayer, Connections, Fellowship and a Sound Teaching Method all congregations in the Body of Christ can experience God together.

Soul Retention is a systematic format that allows for creativity and lessons from the heart of God to be shown. It is that next step when you first come to Christ. It is that next step if you have been a believer for several years.

Soul Retention is a journey that is filled with the excitement of God being revealed in new ways over and over again. It is a cycle that revolves around God, a journey that is eternal.

Thank You For Joining In On The Journey For
Soul Retention.

Rev Thomas Hazelwood

Senior Pastor at Faith Community Wesleyan Church Livonia, Mi.

Email me - I would love to talk with you about Soul Retention.

PastorTom@FaithsChurch.org