

In Jesus Steps

Disciples for Life

Unit 2: Christian Leadership

How to positively influence the attitudes and actions of others for Jesus Christ.

Lesson 2 Tri-fold Love Poured Out

Day One *God Is One*

In *Christian Leadership, Lesson 1*, we acknowledged that Jesus is our leadership model. Our instruction, or blueprint, for following Jesus is the Bible. By obeying God's Word and building on the *Chief Cornerstone*, "Christ himself" (Ephesians 2:19–22), we become purposeful leaders with God's power released through us.

In lesson 1 we also recognized the importance of knowing the truth about Jesus. One of the truths we learned is that Jesus has two natures; He is fully God and fully man (through the Incarnation—God the Son becoming flesh). This truth leads us to another: In being *fully* God, Jesus is of one substance with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, forming the holy Trinity). Both of these facts, the Incarnation and the Trinity, are divine mysteries, something we as humans can never fully understand.

The title of this lesson, *Tri-fold Love Poured Out*, is in honor of our triune God. In our first lesson we learned that the Trinity is the Christian doctrine that defines God as an undivided unity expressed in the threefold personhood of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is an undivided unity and yet Scripture reveals three distinguishing divine *Persons*.

Although the Trinity is beyond human comprehension, there are important aspects we can understand. Therefore, it is our duty to seek God's revelation (disclosure) about it through the Bible. The goal is a proper biblical view of God. A proper view of God will help us know Him better. In this lesson we will consider two attributes or doctrines: *God is One* and *God Is Three Persons*.

I. God Is One

1. Read Deuteronomy 6:4 (compare Mark 12:29–30). Is God one? Yes No (Underline One)

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Deuteronomy 6:4

2. Read Zechariah 14:9. In the end what will everyone know?

The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name. Zechariah 14:9

God is *one* Being. He is not three separate beings. Worshipping three separate gods would be polytheism (belief in more than one God). Christians are monotheistic (belief in *one* God). God alone is a pure and infinite unity; He is the only one worthy of our allegiance and worship. To make this clear, God gave us a specific commandment *not* to worship other gods (Exodus 20:3). This commandment applies to imaginary (made-up) idols or those idols belonging to our earthly nature, such as sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed (Colossians 3:5).

Definition: *Worship* can be defined as total love, honor, and devotion to God.

Worshipping or placing anything above God is idolatry. Samuel Morris (1873–1893) or Prince Kaboo, grew up in a West African village. He belonged to the Kru tribe where his father was the chief. The tribe believed in and made idols.¹

However, Prince Kaboo discovered that these idols had no power to save them from their dreaded enemy—the Grebo tribe. He realized that offering elaborate carved bowls or talking to these imaginary idols made no difference and he turned from following them.²

Prince Kaboo saw many of his people and friends killed by the Grebo tribe. When Kaboo was about 15 years old, he was taken captive and used as a pawn. Since he was the chief’s son, his father and the other villagers brought food and valuable items to try and secure his release. No matter what they brought, the Grebo chief said it was not enough. During this time, Kaboo was beaten, tortured, and made to work long hours.³

Read 1 Corinthians 8:4 and answer questions 3–4:

So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that “An idol is nothing at all in the world” and that “There is no God but one.” 1 Corinthians 8:4

3. What is an idol in this world?

4. Fill in the blank. “There is no God but _____.”

Read James 2:19 and answer questions 5–7:

You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.
James 2:19

5. Do Satan and his demons believe there is one God? Yes No (Underline One)

¹ W. Terry Whalin, *Samuel Morris: The Apostle of Simple Faith*, in *Heroes of the Faith* (Uhrichsville, Ohio: Barbour Publishing, 1999), 16–21.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

6. The apostle James writes that “the demons . . . shudder.” Why do you think they tremble (See Revelation 12:9, 20:10)?

James goes on to describe that saving faith (vv. 20–26) is more than just believing there is one God—it is obeying Him. He uses the illustration of Abraham offering his son Isaac on the altar. This was *not* Abraham’s idea but God’s directive (Genesis 22:1-2). Abraham obeyed God and acted in faith. His faith and actions were working together. Abraham showed by his obedience that He truly believed in the one God. So, God considered him righteous. Basically, James is saying faith without acting on what God says, is dead.

God tells us through the Bible that he sent His Son into the world (John 3:16) and we are to listen or obey Him (Luke 9:35). Those who believe in His Son, Jesus, will have eternal life, but those who reject or disobey the Son, will see God’s wrath (John 3:36). The Greek word *apeitheó* (ἀπειθεῖν) in John 3:36 is translated “reject” or “disobey” in various English translations. The Greek word is defined as being disobedient to God and refusing to believe the gospel.

7. Describe saving faith in your own words.

One day, everyone will acknowledge the LORD is king over the whole earth, but not everyone will be included in His righteous kingdom. Only those with saving faith will be part of God’s holy and joyful realm. Saving faith is belief and action. The action is following and obeying Christ. It is a dynamic faith that results in a changed and fruitful life.

In preparation for *Day Two, God Is Three Persons*, let us read what the Bible says about Jesus.

Read John 1:18 and answer questions 8–10:

No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. John 1:18

8. Is Jesus, the Son of God, Himself God? Yes No (Underline One)

9. Who is in the closest relationship with God the Father?

10. Why is Jesus worthy of our worship?

Jesus is worthy of our worship because He is God. Even if Christ had not died for our sins, He would still be worthy of our worship. Jesus is God and is worshipped for His character and nature.

—End Day One—

Day Two

God Is Three Persons

II. God Is Three Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)

Read Genesis 1:26 and answer questions 11–14:

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” Genesis 1:26

11. Is every human being made in God’s image and likeness (v. 26a)? Yes No (Underline One)

12. Notice God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness” Why do you think God used a plural (more than one) pronoun/adjective when speaking of Himself (v. 26a)?

We get a glimpse of the plurality of the Godhead in Genesis 1:26. God refers to Himself with the word “us.” Who is God calling us? It cannot be the angels because they are created beings and as such do not create. It has also been suggested that God was using the plural of majesty, a form of speech a king might use. In other words, a king or queen might say *we* instead of *I*. “However, in the Old Testament, there are no other examples of a king using the plural of majesty speech.”⁴

13. Why are we made in God’s image (v. 26b)?

Action Steps

14. Meditate on Genesis 1:26 above. Today or tomorrow, think about every person you communicate with as being created and made in God’s image and likeness. When completed, answer this question. How did this thought change the way you treated or felt about others?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to # 14 with the other disciples next week.

The word *Trinity* is not found in the Bible but simply means *tri-unity* or *three persons in one*. The name *Trinity* as referring to God was first used in the book *Against Praxeas* by the church father⁵ Tertullian (160–225 AD). Tertullian used the term to describe the relationship of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 227.

⁵ The church fathers, or fathers of the church, are the early and influential theologians and writers in the Christian church, particularly those of the first five centuries. Those fathers who wrote in Latin are called the Latin (Church) Fathers, and those who wrote in Greek, the Greek (Church) Fathers. Famous Latin Fathers include Tertullian, Augustine of Hippo, Ambrose of Milan, and Jerome; famous Greek Fathers include Irenaeus of Lyons, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, and the three Cappadocian Fathers. (Source: Wikipedia free encyclopedia:<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_Fathers>(accessed on 8/15/2013.)

This word was devised because Bible scholars were reflecting critically on the pattern of divine activity portrayed and revealed in Scripture. As they studied and meditated on God's word, they came to agree on the doctrine of the Trinity. Keep in mind that church doctrine is a written body of teachings that has been set forth and accepted by theologians (experts in study of God) and the church body.

In 325 AD, the Christian church came together at the Council of Nicaea to articulate their belief in and establishment of the doctrine of the Trinity. It was at this council that the church established the Nicene Creed. The doctrine later was confirmed at the Council of Constantinople (381 AD).

The doctrine of the Trinity states there is one God who exists eternally⁶ in three distinct persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Father, Son, and Spirit are of the same divine essence; they have the exact same substance or nature. Each member of the Trinity is fully God and fully one with each other. ("Person" is another term coined by Tertullian to help in understanding the God of the Bible.)

The doctrine of the Trinity is a divine mystery. It is beyond human understanding. This should not be surprising since God is unique and incomprehensible. He is infinite, with no time and space boundaries, and far superior to finite humans. It's a simple yet profound truth: We will never know everything about God. However, we can spend a lifetime faithfully seeking Him and never stop learning wondrous things about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

15. Why do you think we bring up the Trinity in our study of leadership?

Following God, the Son means that we are also following God the Father and God the Spirit. Therefore, our *Leadership Model* must include the triune God. To know and relate to God properly, we must understand the Trinity as much as is humanly possible.

16. Read Matthew 3:17 and fill in the blanks:

And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."
Matthew 3:17

After Jesus was baptized, God the Father said, "This is my _____, whom I _____; with him I am well _____."

Definition: The Greek verb for "well pleased" is *eudokeo* (εὐδοκέω). The tense of the Greek verb used in Matthew 3:17 indicates that the time is not confined to a particular moment. God was pleased with Jesus in the past, at the time of His baptism, and will be pleased with Him in the future. The Greek word *eudokeo* also means to take delight in, to think well of, and to approve.

⁶ Eternally or being eternal in reference to God means that He always was and always will be. He is without beginning or end.

God spoke love and encouragement into Jesus' life. Jesus could be confident of His Father's love at this moment in time as well as in the past and in the future. God always loved Jesus and always will. Jesus could rest in God's care and support of Him.

17. How do *you* think God's love and approval affected Jesus' life and the choices He made?

18. How will being confident of God's love and approval affect how *you* live and lead others?

God the Father publicly (openly) affirmed His love and approval for Jesus the Son at the beginning of His ministry. The Father had confidence in Jesus and expected Him to be obedient and to succeed. Remember, Jesus is fully God and fully man. As a man walking the earth, He was obedient. As fully God, Jesus is equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit; He is not subordinate, secondary, or lesser in any way (John 5:23, 25, 8:58; Mark 2:5).

The Father took pleasure in His Son and delighted in Him. Nevertheless, right after God the Father spoke of His love and approval, the Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:1–11). Jesus had fasted for forty days and forty nights and while in this weakened physical state, the devil pursued Him for evil purposes.

19. How do *you* view times of testing, struggles, or pain?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to # 15–19 with your team.

About distress, let us return to the biography of Samuel Morris, or Prince Kaboo. The prince went through horrific pain and suffering for many months waiting for the Grebo chief to accept his village's gifts in return for his freedom. But whatever his people—and father—brought, it was never enough. Finally, his father gave up trying to buy his son's release and did not return. Kaboo's torture increased.

“The chief raised the thick vine over his head and let out a piercing scream. With all his might, he brought down the whip across the young boy's soft ebony back. The poisonous thorns tore open Kaboo's flesh in streaks of pain. Again and again, the chief whipped the boy. Each lashing was more prolonged and severe than the one before it. Each stroke tore into Kaboo's flesh and implanted a fiery virus. Before long Kaboo felt like his entire body was on fire.”⁷

When the Grebo chief realized Kaboo's father was not going to return, he had the prince beaten every day. He was barely alive when the Grebo chief ordered his death. They were planning to put him in a hole, place a stick in his mouth to keep it open and smear honey on his face. They would then draw driver ants to his location so the ants would eat his flesh.⁸

⁷ Whalin, *Samuel Morris*, 29.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 34–35.

They tied him to two logs that formed a cross tree and placed him in the middle of the village. Everyone seemed happy to see him tormented and no one came to his defense. He was to be placed in the hole the next day to die in agony. The situation seemed hopeless.

Biographer Terry Whalin recounts what happened next. “Suddenly, a bright light like a flash of lightning shone out over Kaboo and his wooden cross. ‘Aiiee!’ yelled the terrified Grebo chief and his men. The light blinded their eyes. They were stunned, helpless.” A “young Kru slave brought out to witness the torture of his prince watched the fantastic scene with amazement.” Shortly thereafter, “Kaboo heard a loud voice that seemed to be coming from above him. The voice commanded, ‘Rise up, Kaboo! Rise up and run away!’”⁹

“Instantly, the ropes that bound Kaboo fell from his hands. Strength surged through his body. Throughout that day, he had had nothing to eat or drink yet he felt neither hunger nor thirst nor weakness. Jumping up, Kaboo obeyed the wonderful voice and ran away from the surprised Africans as fast as a deer. While the Grebos stumbled helplessly around the camp, Kaboo disappeared into the jungle.”¹⁰

20. Who was responsible for the flash of light, the Grebos being blinded, the ropes falling off, and the voice telling Kaboo to rise up and run away?

Only God could have done this miracle. Could He have done it before Kaboo’s capture, torture, and near death? Of course, He could have. But God’s timing is always perfect and His ways beyond understanding (Romans 11:33–34).

When faced with hardship or heartache, it is tempting to feel that our heavenly Father does not love or care about us. Perhaps we did not have a father growing up, or if we did, he was cold, aloof, or abusive. Look at Kaboo; he did have a good father. But even this father gave up and left his son to die.

Your heavenly Father *loves* you. He may not always act in the way you prefer but remember—God’s ways are unsearchable. God is love and He most certainly loves you.

In a clever yet true observation, someone has said, “God created man in His image and man returned the favor.” We try to understand God according to our own feeble minds. We try to make God think, act, and love like we do—and sometimes we really believe that is who God is. When He does not act according to our ways, we get upset. However, the Bible tells us that our ways are not His ways (Isaiah 55:8–9).

Jesus is perfect. He remained the perfect Son as He walked the earth in human flesh. He had emotions like anger and sorrow and physically He would tire and feel sorrow. Yet he never had to be corrected or disciplined. You and I are not so flawless. We are not always so dutiful and may fail to follow through with God’s will and purpose for us. These are times when you and I

⁹ Ibid., 36.

¹⁰ Ibid., 37.

may experience the Father's discipline. God may use rough times to correct, train, or instruct in His ways. He may also use tragic circumstances to reveal His vast love for us.

Read Proverbs 3:11–12 and answer questions 21–23:

My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, ¹²because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. Proverbs 3:11–12 (Women are sons too.¹¹)

21. Does the LORD discipline those He loves (v. 12a)? Yes No (Underline One)
22. Does the LORD discipline you as a Father, for your good (v. 12)? Yes No (Underline One)
23. Share a time that you experienced God's discipline or rebuke (reprimand) and what you learned?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to #23 with your team.

I remember a time when I was disciplined by the Lord through an incident He had orchestrated. Sometimes it is not easy to discern if God is disciplining us for a wrong we have committed or just to hone (sharpen and refine) our walk with Him. Also, He may use a blessing or gift as a way of discipline similar to the way His kindness leads to repentance (Romans 2:3). We must be alert to the Holy Spirit's movement in our lives to discern God's discipline and response.

This incident where I was disciplined happened a long time ago. My husband and I had visited a plant nursery to purchase 100 daylilies for our yard. I had chosen a particular color and showed the nursery worker. Although the flowers weren't blooming at that time, he assured me they were the exact color I had specified.

We bought the daylilies and planted them. Well, lo and behold they were not the color I had chosen. We decided not to confront the nursery for their mistake. However, I started complaining loud and clear to myself and visitors. *This is not the color I wanted. The nursery made a mistake.* One morning a few days later, I walked onto the front porch and the daylilies were gone—nothing but tiny nubs on the ground. A herd of deer had feasted on my “not right color” flowers—now I had none at all. I understood God was rightfully disciplining me and immediately confessed my ungratefulness, complaining, and grumbling. God was graciously disciplining me because He loved me.

¹¹ Yes, even if you are a woman, you are called a son of God to indicate that you are a full member in God's household (Galatians 3:26–29). In ancient times, women did not have the right to inherit property and in some cases were considered property themselves. The Spirit of God gives you full status in God's family as His child (Romans 8:16–17).

We do not always know if we have done something wrong. If we are going through a difficult time we should ask our divine Father if we have been disobedient or sinned in some way (Matthew 18:7–9). If the Holy Spirit brings a sin to mind, we tell our Father how sorry we are, stop doing it, and accept forgiveness in Christ (1 John 1:9).

We should keep the focus on God and not ourselves. Self-pity is a sin, and morbid (dark) introspection (self-examination) is dangerous to your mental health. If you have not sinned, the advice is the same: *continue to keep your eyes on our triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

24. If you are going through a rough season of life right now, read 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17 and share with your discipleship team so they may pray for you.

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17

It is important to look at personal situations through the life of Jesus. He was completely loved and approved of by the Father. Yet right after His baptism the Spirit led Him into a demanding situation in the desert. Without any human companionship, He was asked to fast for 40 days and withstand the attacks of a powerful, supernatural adversary (enemy).

Jesus faced challenges in life and in death. Do not ever forget that Jesus was asked to take our sins into His body and suffer crucifixion (execution on a cross). He accepted the assignment because He loves the Father, and He loves us. Jesus was faultless, blameless, and spotless. He had no sins to be rescued from. Let us bring this to mind when we are asked to complete a tough assignment or when we are lonely, without family, friends, or any hint of human kindness.

The Bible tells us it is not only a privilege to believe in Christ, but to suffer for Him as well. The apostle Paul taught the early church this truth, and it is just as true for us today. Read the following verses and answer question 25:

For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have. Philippians 1:29–30 (Compare Matthew :11–12; 2 Thessalonians 1:4–5; John 15:20)

25. If you are undergoing persecution for your faith, please share your experience for prayer and encouragement from and with your team.

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to # 24–25 with the other disciples next week.

—End Day Two—

Day Three

The Love of the Father

26. Read John 3:16. How did God demonstrate His love for *you*?

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. John 3:16

Have you been wondering what happened to Kaboo after his miraculous escape from his captors? Well, he decided *not* to return to his village because he feared the people would be at risk from their enemy. Instead, he followed the river in a different direction. After a couple of weeks he came upon a coffee bean plantation where he decided to meet the workers.¹²

Not only was he treated well and given a job, but he also found someone with whom he could talk. A member of his own Kru tribe was working there. Kaboo continued to wonder about the miraculous voice and light that saved him.

One day he happened upon his friend, who had his eyes closed. The Kru boy later told Kaboo that he had been praying to God, his Father. He explained the gospel and later took Kaboo to church. Mrs. Davis, a missionary on the plantation, would later begin to teach Kaboo English from the Bible.

Sometime later when Kaboo heard the story of Saul on the road to Damascus, he jumped up and said, “That light! That voice! It happened to me!” He knew it was Jesus’ light and voice he had experienced in the Grebo village. Kaboo trusted in Jesus and said, “His Father is my Father now.”¹³ During this time Kaboo received his Christian name, Samuel. It was the custom at that period to get a new, Christian name when one accepted Christ.

Kaboo could look back over his life and experiences and know that his heavenly Father was good and loving. His plans were right. Kaboo’s response was unlike some people who focus on the pain and suffering in their lives and choose to blame God instead. Their image of the Father needs calibrating (adjusting).

Our heavenly Father is reliable and dependable in His relationship with you. He will never let you down. He is unselfish and generous towards you. He wants what is best for you.

Remember, God cares deeply about you and is totally interested in all that you do. His plans for you are always good, even though at times certain events may not make sense and may even involve pain or loss. Yet God never forgets you—instead He is always there cheering you on and helping you succeed in life.

¹² Whalin, *Samuel Morris*, 29. The next four paragraphs gleaned from 43–58.

¹³ *Ibid*, 58.

In addition, He is always by your side even when everyone has left or abandoned you. Even when you do not feel or see His presence, He is still working to make things right. He brings perfect peace and joy into your life. God is eternally giving. He always delights in giving you good gifts. God really, really likes you, is fully devoted to you, and has genuine affection for you.

27. Read Jeremiah 31:3..The LORD says: “I have _____ you with and an everlasting _____; I have drawn you with _____.”

The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.” Jeremiah 31:3

28. Can you look back on your life and say, “My heavenly Father truly loves me and has always been good to me”? Yes No Sometimes (Underline One)

29. Explain your answer to #28 about whether or not you believe your heavenly Father truly loves you:

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to #28–29 with the other disciples next week. Pray for those team members who feel unsure of God’s love to receive and feel His love always.

Read 1 John 3:1 and answer questions 30–31:

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 1 John 3:1

30. How has the Father lavished His love on us (v. 1a)?

31. What is a reason we may have difficulty in this world (v. 1b)?

Read Psalm 68:5–6 and answer questions 32–33:

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. ⁶God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land. Psalm 68:5–6 (“Sun-scorched land” refers to being away from God and His comfort.)

32. List four ways God the Father shows His love to people (vv. 5–6)?

33. Where do the rebellious (against God) live (v. 6)?

God lovingly watches over His people. He sees when we are oppressed, ridiculed, and abused. Even though *we* may be powerless to change our lives, our Father in heaven is all powerful. He wants us to trust Him. No matter how hopeless or devastating circumstance seem, we must persevere (keep on) and trust in God's deliverance. God is fully able to bring good out of bad.

For those of us without earthly fathers, God confirms that He is our Father. We look to God as our heavenly Father who provides, protects, disciplines, and encourages us to live our best life. For those of us without spouses, God defends and protects us as well. He wraps His loving arms around us, giving comfort, peace, and security.

The psalm writer tells us, "God sets the lonely in families,". This can have several meanings. God does provide the lonely with spouses and the fruitfulness of children. He also takes the new believers, who were lonely and desolate without God, and places them in His church family. Setting the lonely in families can also mean that God sets the homeless in a safe and comfortable dwelling.

God loves prisoners, whether they are justly or unjustly convicted. Just as God led the Israelites out of Egypt during the Exodus, He desires all captives to be set free. Those held captive by Satan but willing to repent, He leads out with heavenly singing (Psalm 68:5–6). Those accused falsely or held captive because of their faith in Christ, God strengthens and sings over them in love until He leads them out victoriously.

Read Psalm 52:8 and answer questions 34–35:

But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever. Psalm 52:8

34. How long will God have unfailing (constant) love you?

35. Will God's love fall short, be incomplete, or fail you in some way? Yes No (Underline One)

In ancient Israel, olive trees were valuable for their wood, oil, and olives. God provided the trees to bless people with shelter, safety, and food. In Psalm 52, David, then king of Israel, compares himself to an olive tree, thriving in the house of God.

David had been anointed (with oil from olive tree) to be king of Israel even though the first king, Saul, was still in power. King Saul considered David a rival, and he was always plotting to get rid of David. It was during this time that David compared himself to an olive tree that not only withstands the storms of life but prospers during difficult circumstances.

King David was a leader who had confidence that God loves him. He knew God's love for him would never stop or fail. David found his peace and success in God, and not in his circumstances.

Samuel Morris also had confidence in God's love for him. He believed this truth even though his difficulties were far from over. His first struggle had to do with sinful behavior. New and even mature Christians may wrestle with their wrongdoing and lack of perfection (Matthew 5:48).

Samuel "soon became conscious that his redemption from the guilt and penalty of past sins did not free him from continued failings in his daily actions. His body continued to bear the scars from his many beatings as a pawn of the Grebos. His mind had grown accustomed to fear and hate during his years of cruel suffering. His beatings among the Grebos made him feel hopelessly inferior. He could see no future for himself apart from a miracle."¹⁴

After we are *born again* in Christ we are new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17). Our sins are forgiven, and we have God's Spirit to lead us in all righteousness. However, sometimes we do not realize the power available to us through the Holy Spirit. We may give in too easily to temptation without seeking and trusting the Spirit to empower us. We will learn more about the third Person of the Trinity in Unit 2, Lessons 6–7

In Christ, we are to count ourselves dead to sin. We now live under grace and not the law. We have the ability to do what is right (Romans 6:11–14) but we continue to sin (1 John 1:8).

While God does not take away our fallen nature, we have an ability to choose good over evil (Romans 6:19). We still have free will to choose, and we still have Satan and his followers prowling around, looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). In our natural body we will always be tempted to put ourselves, our comfort, and our own satisfaction above God and others. Also, we still live in a fallen and corrupted world which can cause a multitude of problems.

36. Why do Christians still sin after trusting Jesus as Lord and Savior?

In His humanity Jesus was tempted to turn rocks into bread when He was hungry, to receive His reward early if He worshipped Satan and avoided the cross with its torment and humiliation (Matthew 4:1–11, 26:38–39). Jesus was perfect and withstood every attack and temptation; He never sinned. *He always chose God's way.*

Jesus lives within believers and helps us to resist temptation. We need to allow Jesus to take over our lives and work through us (Philippians 4:13). In this way, we begin the *process* called sanctification—to become increasingly like Christ. Sanctification means that we grow in holiness and purity day by day (Hebrews 12:14–15; 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8).

¹⁴ Ibid., 60.

As a new creation we do not enjoy sin and we do not habitually (consistently) sin, but it does happen. We make wrong and sinful choices. However, we should be sinning less and resemble Christ more today than yesterday. Our loving Father wants us to depend on Him for help.

When we resemble Christ, we resemble our Father in heaven. We become true sons and daughters of the one, true, living God. Our divine Father is honored.

Read John 14:6–9 and answer questions 37–39:

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." ⁸Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." ⁹Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" John 14:6–9

37. If we know Jesus, we will know His Father (v. 7). True False (Underline One)

38. Who is Jesus' Father?

39. When the disciples saw Jesus, they saw God the Father (v. 9). True False (Underline One)

Action Step

40. Memorize John 14:6–7.

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

Accountability: Be prepared to share your memory verse #40 with your discipleship team.

—End Day Three—

Day Four

The Love of the Spirit

Gradually, Samuel began to understand the wonderful work of the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit began moving in his life and replacing hate with love. Samuel continually studied and prayed to His heavenly Father to learn more about the Holy Spirit.¹⁵

Read Romans 5:5 and answer questions 41–43:

And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. Romans 5:5

41. How are we able to love God and love others?

42. Are you receiving God's love into *your* heart through the Holy Spirit? Yes No (Underline One)

Action Step

43. In love, explain Romans 5:5 to another Christian and share their reaction? (You might begin by telling them you are studying this verse and asking if you can share what you have learned.)

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers #41–42 and your memory verse #43 with your discipleship team.

Read John 14:16–17 and answer questions 44–45:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—¹⁷the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. John 14:16–17

44. Who comes alongside believers to help and be with them forever (v. 16)?

45. Who lives in you, as a Christian, and will be in you (v. 17)?

It was evident to the local missionaries that Samuel was being used by God. So when he shared his burden for his people to know Christ, it was suggested he go to America to be educated as a preacher. Another missionary told him about her teacher, Stephen Merritt, who had taught her much about the Holy Spirit.

¹⁵ Ibid., The rest of Samuel's story is gleaned from pp. 61, 71–72, 75, 91, 99, 100.

One of the lessons Merritt taught her was to humble herself and commit fully to God. In this way, the Holy Spirit will empower believers for God's work. When we surrender minute by minute, the Spirit will lead us perfectly in our Father's will.

46. Read Acts 8:29. Who told Philip to go by the chariot?

The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." Acts 8:29

Philip was obedient and ran to the chariot. He found an important official from Ethiopia reading from Isaiah. Philip shared the good news about Jesus and the man was saved. Tradition has it that the man went back to his country with the good news, and this was the start of the Ethiopian church.

Samuel, too, felt God leading him. He obediently walked to the nearest harbor looking for a ship to take him to America. He wanted to find the Bible teacher, Stephen Merritt, and learn more about the Holy Spirit. Samuel was told Merritt lived in New York City.

When Samuel found a ship headed to New York, he approached the captain. He told the captain that His Father had told him that he would take him to America. The captain pushed Samuel aside and swore at him. He and his crew were hardened, evil, sailors.

Samuel did not give up and before the ship left harbor, he was on board—as a crew member. Life on board was difficult. He was slapped and kicked by other crew members, including the captain. At one point the captain punched him so hard he lay on the floor for several hours, unconscious.

Once he regained consciousness, he cheerfully went right back to work. Samuel began singing praise songs to Jesus and asked the captain if he knew Jesus. The captain admitted he had been exposed to the truth in his youth and agreed to let Samuel pray for him. He prayed that the captain might know the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Samuel prayed for all the crew and worked hard. He did not realize it at the time, but his almost superhuman ability to work through fatigue was earning him respect. His exceptional work ethic and ability to love the men in the face of their cruelty was the work of the Holy Spirit.

One of the crew members, a Malaysian, hated Samuel so much that he almost killed him. When the Malaysian fell ill and was about to die, Samuel stayed by his side praying for him and ministering to him. He recovered and so did his attitude toward Samuel.

By the time the ship docked in New York, most of the crew members had become Christians. This was a changed crew. This was now a brotherhood of believers praising God and caring for each other's needs. They were beginning to resemble their triune God.

In day two of this lesson, we looked at Jesus' baptism and temptation in the desert. Notice how God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were working together. Jesus was identifying with our sin (but had no sin) and our need for repentance (but had no need of repentance) by submitting to water baptism. The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus and God the Father spoke words of love and affirmation (support) over Him.

Afterwards the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tested or tempted by the devil. God divinely orchestrated these events and all members of the triune God participated in harmony. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have a perfect loving and melodious relationship. In fact, they are so perfectly matched that they are one in substance (essence) and being (Colossians 2:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16).

We will never have the exact substance and being as God because He is unique. However, Jesus wants us to be one with God in the sense of unity. He wants us to be in a loving and harmonious relationship with Him and with each other. He desires to live within us and help us in our connection with God and with other people. Jesus prayed to the Father regarding believers "*that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me*" (John 17:22–23).

God desires unity with you because He loves you. He is interested in you and everything about you. God loves you with a powerful and amazing love. No one comes close to loving you like the Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit!

As a new creation and as born-again believers, we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). We are righteous and holy before God. This is our legal place or position based on the blood of Christ. We have the ability as a new creation to look upon people, circumstances, and situations in a unique way—God's way. We lead through His Spirit for His purposes.

Read John 3:6 and answer questions 47–48:

Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. John 3:6

47. Who gives birth to your *spirit*?

48. How can *you* keep your mind holy with pure attitudes and emotions?

Action Step

49. What is one thing from this day's lesson that you will put into practice?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to # 47–49 with the other disciples next week.

—End Day Four—

Day Five

The Love of Christ

Read John 6:44 and answer questions 50–51:

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.” John 6:44 (See Romans 10:9–10 for human response in salvation.)

50. Jesus says that no one can come to Him (believe and trust) unless the _____ draws (attracts, pulls) them.

51. What does it mean when Jesus says He will raise them (believers) up at the last day (compare 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18)?

Jesus loves you perpetually and powerfully. If you and I belong to Jesus, He will raise us up from our graves and give us a joyful, everlasting life. If we are still alive when the Lord returns, He will raise us up to eternal life, giving us new bodies, no longer subject to decay. The last day refers to the end of time as we know it, and the day of God’s final triumph over evil.

52. Read John 6:51. Explain what Jesus’ means by saying He is *the living bread*?

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” John 6:51

We must have food (bread) to physically live. We must have Jesus (spiritual food) to have an abundant (not wasted) life now, and eternal life after our body dies. This is an excellent metaphor (one thing used to represent another). Our spiritual being depends upon our continuing relationship with Jesus.

What happens if we only eat a few crumbs of bread each day? We may remain alive, but we will be unhealthy and have little energy. It is the same with eating spiritually of Jesus. We must partake of Jesus continually if we are to be healthy in our spirits.

Samuel Morris was dedicated to Jesus and was healthy in spirit. When he arrived in New York, he asked the first person he met if he knew Stephen Merritt. Now, even in the nineteenth century, New York was a big city. Amazingly this man knew Stephen Merritt, a pastor, and took Samuel to his church. God was surely acting on Samuel’s behalf.

Merritt had a prayer meeting, and so he sent Samuel to the church’s mission next door. Several hours later when he returned to the mission, he found seventeen men weeping and repenting of their sins. Even though Samuel could not speak English very well, he had shared the truth about Jesus. Merritt was amazed and knew God’s hand was on Samuel.

The next day Merritt was pointing out places of interest to Samuel from his coach (horse-drawn carriage). Samuel asked Merritt if he had ever prayed in his coach. He replied that he did *think* of spiritual things when riding along.

Samuel knelt down and pulled Merritt to his knees and prayed: “Holy Ghost, I have come all the way from Africa to talk to Stephen Merritt about the Holy Ghost. Now I am here, he shows me the harbor, the churches, the banks, and other things, but does not say one word about You. Take out of his heart the things of the earth, and so fill him with Yourself that he cannot speak or write or talk of anything but You.”¹⁶

Immediately, “the burning presence of the Holy Ghost filled the soul of Stephen Merritt. He prayed as he had never prayed before. Stephen Merritt had been in meetings with missionaries, ministers, and bishops, but he had never felt the burning presence of the Holy Ghost as he did while kneeling in this coach beside a poor, homeless, African boy.”¹⁷

Action Step

53. Pray Samuel’s prayer for yourself and your discipleship team:

O Lord, take out of our hearts the things of the earth, and so fill us with Yourself so that we cannot speak or write or talk of anything but You. Amen.

54. What impresses you about Samuel’s leadership?

Accountability: Confirm to your team that you prayed for them and share your answer to #54.

A leader must be alive in his or her *spiritual being* to make an impact in our world. God looks for those who are wholly committed to Him. Psalm 34:15 tells us: *The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry.*

God is looking for those who are righteous *in Christ* and desire to be used for His glory. If you are lacking zeal for the Lord, pray for it. The same thing that James 1:6–8 says about seeking wisdom is true about seeking all virtues (such as love, kindness, compassion, and courage): *But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.*

55. Consider what virtues God would like to develop in *you*. List the virtues and pray for God to establish them in your heart and soul.

¹⁶ Ibid., 106.

¹⁷ Ibid., 106–107.

56. Read Philippians 2:6–8. How do you know Jesus loves you?

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Philippians 2:6–8

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to # 55–56 with the other disciples at your next meeting.

Although Jesus is the second Person of the Trinity and fully God, He did not demand or expect His divine rights. He put aside His glory and by the power of the Holy Spirit was born of a virgin named Mary. He stooped down from the most powerful and formidable position in the universe to become a lowly man on earth. He was confined in a frail body whereby He could be bruised and damaged, both physically and emotionally. He experienced trauma, pain, and heartache willingly. But He never blamed anyone, including you or me.

Love is giving of oneself for the benefit of another. Jesus gave the ultimate gift of love. Have you heard the proverb, “Actions speak louder than words”? The Bible would put it this way: “Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:18). Jesus’ act of coming down from heaven, taking the form of a man, and then dying a painful and horrible death speaks loudly: *I LOVE YOU! Immensely. Completely. Forever.*

57. Read Romans 8:38–39. After reading these two verses, if you believe anything can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord, please explain to your group what that might be.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38–39

You can rest in God’s love that is in Christ Jesus. It is secure. God Himself protects you in His love. No one can snatch you out of His hand (John 10:28–29). God’s love for you cannot be taken away by anyone or anything.

58. Read Romans 8:28–29. What result is God looking for as He works for your good?

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. Romans 8:28–29

These verses hold an *eternal and enduring message of love for us*. God is promising to change us into the likeness of His Son. Whatever is happening in our lives, God will use it so that we

become more giving, more loving, more compassionate, and kinder In other words, we look more like Jesus.

Samuel was secure in God's love. He continued to face challenges but depended on his triune God. Stephen Merritt asked him to speak to about 600 youths one Sunday. Initially the kids were laughing and making fun of Samuel.¹⁸

Samuel waited for the Holy Spirit to give him the words to speak. Merritt had been called away on church business earlier, but when he returned, he was stunned at the scene. The Spirit of God was powerfully at work. The youth were kneeling, weeping, and giving their lives to Jesus.

Merritt decided to help Samuel with his Christian education. He arranged for Samuel to attend Taylor University in Indiana where he could grow in his Bible knowledge. He was only there about two years before he contracted a severe cold and died.

While at Taylor University, God continued to use Samuel for His glory. He inspired many. The students prayed fervently for Samuel's recovery and believed he would be healed. However, Samuel knew His God and accepted His loving will.

Samuel said: "I understand now why my Father has not healed me. He showed me that I have finished my work here on earth. I have done all that I was meant to do. It is time for me to go and be with Him. I saw the angels! They will be coming for me soon! The light my Father in heaven sent to save me when I was hanging helpless on that cross in Africa was for a purpose. Now my work here on earth has been finished."¹⁹

59. How has the story of Samuel Morris encouraged you?

60. Do you think Samuel was a leader who relied on God and His love? Yes No (Underline One)

Love is a loyal, dependable, unselfish, generous, and caring concern for another. It is also extreme liking, radical devotion, and genuine affection. Our triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—has this kind of love for us. He has perfect love us. Tri-fold love poured out:

God the Father loves you.
God the Son loves you.
God the Holy Spirit loves you.

61. Do you genuinely believe that God loves and cares for you? Totally Sometimes Never (Underline One)

62. If you answered sometimes or never in #61, why do you feel insecure in God's love?

¹⁸ Ibid., 108–09.

¹⁹ Ibid., 155–156.

Some people struggle with questions about God's love for them. There may be no apparent reason for their feelings, or they may have had a traumatic childhood. They may have been abused, neglected, abandoned, suffered loss, or born with a disability. This person might say, *If God loved me, I would not have had this particular experience or circumstance in my life.*

63. How can your disciple team pray for you so that you may rest in God's unfailing love?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to # 63 with the other disciples next week.

Believing and accepting God's pure and holy love is critical in the life of a Christian leader. We must come to a place in our lives where we know without a doubt that God loves us. We trust in His unfailing love every day no matter what is happening. All we think, do, and plan is dependent on our trust in God's love.

It does not matter if every person we have ever known has failed us. It does not matter if we have never been loved by any other person in this world. It does not matter what people think of us. These earthly things are not a barometer (indicator) of God's love for us.

One of the measurements of God's love for us is that we exist at all. He formed us and knew us before we were born (Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139:14–16) and made us in His image (Genesis 1:26). Yes, no matter what we look like or what our limitations, God designed us in His love and for His love. Be encouraged, God made us with the capacity to accept and trust in His love.

Action Step

64. Memorize 1 John 4:16: *And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.*

Just as our salvation is an act of faith, so is our belief and trust in God's unfailing love. Anything that does not come from faith is sin (Romans 14:23). Pray right now and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in faith to believe and trust in God's unfailing love.

We have been focusing on God's love for us. This is the starting point in studying and learning about love. The reason you and I can love is because God first loved us (1 John 4:19). We would be remiss (careless) if we did not remind ourselves that God's love must be reciprocated. God expected the Israelites to return His love and He expects people today to return His love as well. (See Deuteronomy 7:9–10 and Revelation 2:4–5).

—End of Day Five and Lesson Two—

Next—Unit 2: Christian Leadership, Lesson 3: Fruit and Leadership

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