

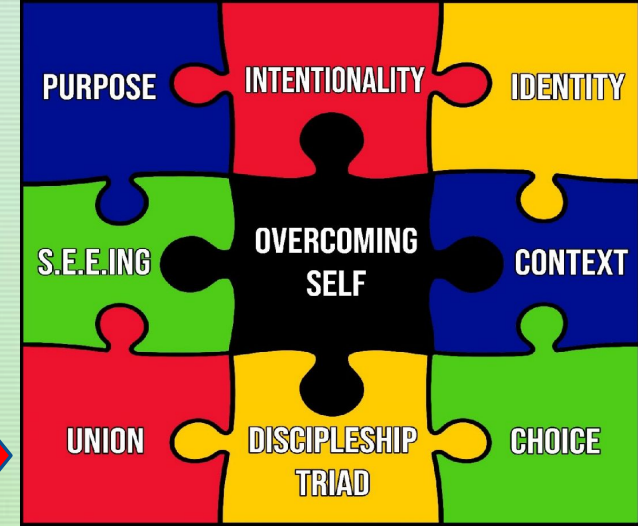
The Strategic Discipleship Workbook

# Session Nine: Union

# The Challenge of Union

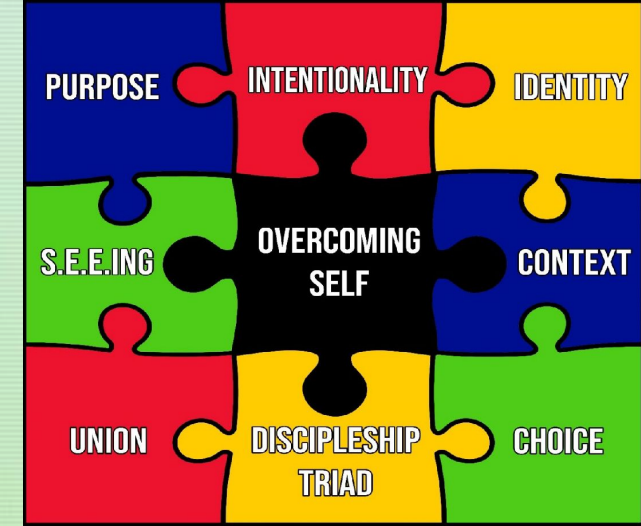
- Union is an other-worldly concept that makes no sense to the natural mind. Why?
- What is the “the veil of the flesh”? What is its function?
- Because Oneness” is such a difficult concept, many Christians just “check the box” and move on without understanding it.

- Comment: Even believers well-practiced at taking Papa at His word have difficulty accepting the plain, literal meaning of the words of **Colossians 1:27** and **Galatians 2:20**. The resistance comes from our deeply-seated separated thinking and the fact that we have a difficult time wrapping our understanding around truth so different from our daily experience in the world. One need not be a mystic to hold the thought of Union in one’s mind; yet, it is a great mystery simply because it is an other-worldly concept. If we could grasp these two principles—the “Hope of Glory Principle” and the “I, Yet Not I Principle”—the rest of this book (and the content of many other Christian books!) would be unnecessary. About the best we can muster is to acknowledge the truth of the Scripture, admit that we don't understand it, *but accept it anyway*. Then, over time, the Holy Spirit teaches us the deep mysteries of God. Embracing *always* comes before understanding.



# The Challenge of Union (Cont'd)

- Central truth of the Kingdom: 1 Cor. 6:17, "But he who is joined to the Lord is *one spirit* with Him."
- What does "one spirit" mean? What are the ramifications of "one spirit" and separation and Individual Self (IS)?
- What is "Me/Other-Than-Me" (M/OTM)? How does it affect our thinking? What are the ramifications of M/OTM in the context of "one spirit" and "no separation" truths?
- "Our quest is to embrace and de-mystify a God that calls Himself "I AM" and tells us He holds our atoms together on the sub-sub-atomic level. He is simultaneously bigger than the universe itself, and the micro-scopic glue that holds our atoms in their configuration. He holds galaxies in their orbit & electrons in theirs!"
- Thought Question: If Jesus was fully human; and, if He could say, "I and the Father are One"; and, if he was NEVER separated until the cross; then, what is the factor that makes our experience different? How does that difference affect our discipleship quest?
- Papa did not conceal His mysteries to make them impossible to find, He did it to make them difficult to find!

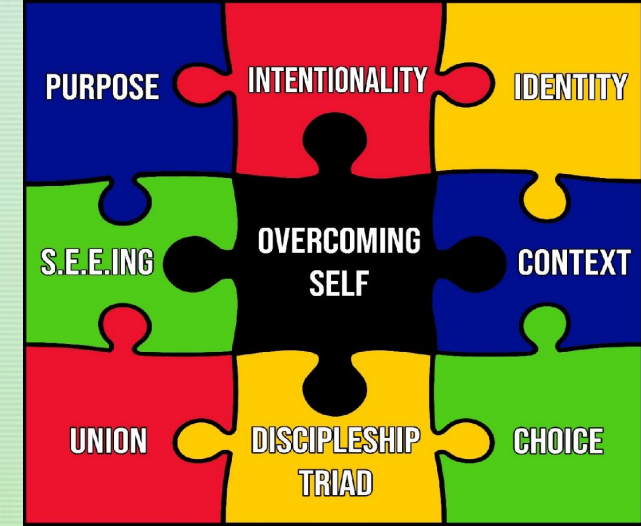


Pg. 97, 3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph:

We are one Spirit with Christ, that much is settled. But, our soul is locked in a titanic power struggle played out in our experiences and circumstances. It is the power struggle for controlling authority between our Independent Self and our Union Self. It is the continuing struggle against Lucifer's rebellion influence over my mind, will, and emotions. We overcome separation and *become* Him when we lay down our "right" to live an independent life. We become most like what we most look at; and when we intentionally look at Him and take our eyes off ourselves, we are changed from servant to a friend, a friend to a son, and a son to a king. Perfected love is a Person, not an emotion, an activity, or a religious goal. The principle is, "Imitate, Emulate, Assimilate." We *imitate* our teachers and we *emulate* our Master until we *assimilate* into union with Him. Our Independent Self gives way little by little until, "I...yet, not I" (**Galatians 2:20**) is the reality on earth in us, as it is in Heaven. When we finally see that it is Papa's purpose and Program to bring us into soul union with Him, we can set aside the false humility and self-depreciation and get on with life in the context in which He has ordained our experience. If we can grasp it, our Union with Him enables a shared consciousness that both sees what He is doing and hears what He is saying in "real" time—the eternal.

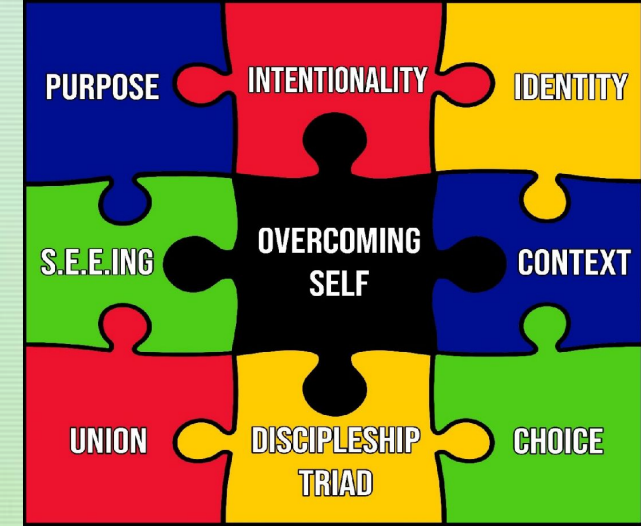
# D1: Jesus' Priestly Prayer: Oneness

- What do you think happens when Jesus Prays? (Duh...)
- Read John 17:9-11. What did Jesus pray for us? Now, what did He NOT pray for us? Why do you think that is?
- NEWSFLASH! With Oneness comes everything else we need!
- When we are One, sin is not an issue. And when we are One—attached to the Vine—all of the Fruits of the Spirit grow on our branches for consumption of those around. He understood that Union is the foundation for everything. He prayed for Oneness because He knew that achieving it would take all of our focus and attention, but success would bring all of the other spiritual results that we seek. Jesus prayed *strategically*, and He prayed with *the end in mind*.
- When we hear messages about Oneness, the context is usually “unity of thought, feeling, belief, aim, agreement; concord” because that fits neatly in our western mindset.
- Greek word = “heis,” means “one and the same.” Union is the polar opposite of Independent Self!
- In asking the Father to make us one, *Jesus effectively spoke our IS out of existence*, and what remains now is for us to reject the T/S/M *illusion* of separated-ness.



# Day 2: Imitate, Emulate, Assimilate

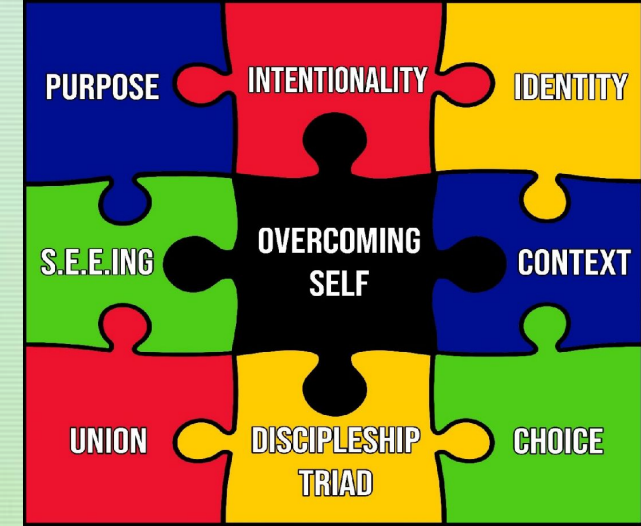
- Discipleship is the process of unlearning that which we have learned from this world and our /S instincts, re-learning that which we have learned wrong from our carnal mind, and, re-learning eternal realities that prepare us for return to the next phase of existence beyond T/S/M.
- Six New Testament verses establish the principle of imitation as Step 1 of the “conformation-to-Transformation” process: Begin by *faithful imitation* (1 Corinthians 4:16, 1 Corinthians 11:1, Ephesians 5:1, Hebrews 6:12, 3 John 1:11, 1 Thessalonians 2:14).
- Imitation is a real strategy, but the goal is not just to imitate, it is to inherit the promises by pressing through to assimilation.
- As we keep on being faithful to imitate, at some point, we cease to imitate, we begin to emulate, and then we assimilate; that is, we *become* the change we are emulating.
- The principle is, “Imitate, Emulate, Assimilate”: We *imitate* our teachers and we *emulate* our Master until we *assimilate* into union with Him. Our Independent Self gives way little by little until “I...yet, not I” (Galatians 2:20) is the reality on earth in us, as it is in Heaven.



# D3: Reconciliation and Union

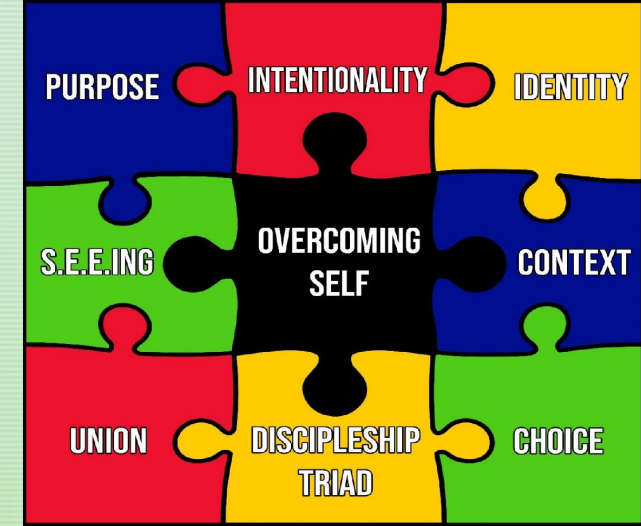
- There is a world of difference between feeling the temptation and entering into the transgression.
- Why was Jesus “in all *points* tempted as we are, **yet without sin?**” (Hebrews 4:15) What does that tell us about the “Flesh—Separation—Temptation—Sin” Cycle?

- “We are not separated from God because we sin; we sin because we are separated from God. Norman Grubb says it this way: “What the Bible calls sin is, in one phrase, Independent Self” (*IS*). The original creation of God was in perfect Union with him, and separated thinking was non-existent. Adam and Eve experienced unbroken fellowship, and sin was not an issue until deception and separation happened. The Independent Self is self-centered, acting in its own interests, gratification, and existence apart from the Creator. It is enthroned as god at the center of its world, and has believed/invested in the lie, “You will be like God, knowing [in the sense of “defining”] good and evil.” It abandoned fusion with Papa, enthroned its interests above all others, and became the carnal mind. For the first time since his creation, Adam knew insecurity because now there was a veil of separation between the source of his security and his heart; the source of his true identity and his spirit; and the source of deep understanding and what became his darkened mind, identified by Paul in **Ephesians 4:17-18**: “<sup>17</sup>[Y]ou should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, <sup>18</sup>having their understanding darkened, being alienated [*separated*] from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”



# D4: What About Individuality?

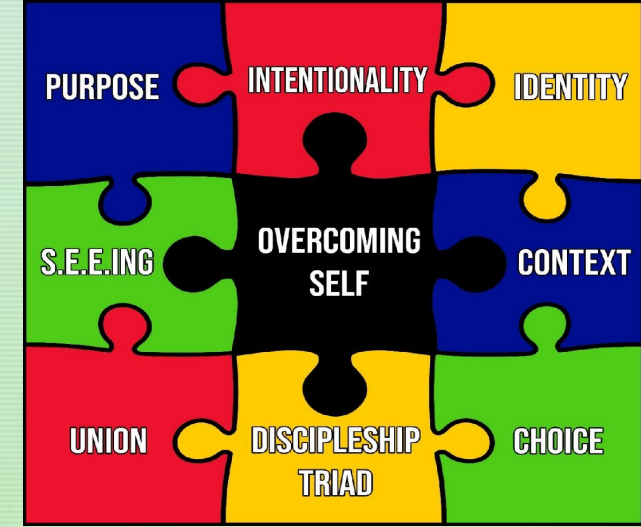
- What is the difference between “unity” and “Union”?
- If the quest is to eradicate *IS*, is there room for individuality? Why or why not? If yes, how?
- Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-20 together. How does the concept of “body” apply to Union? Comment on the fact that there are 10 instances of the word “one.”
- Purposes of spiritual gifts are four-fold: 1) Ensure an adequate distribution of ministry across the geographically-separated Church Body; 2) Secure the advantage that “specialization of function” provides to the Body; 3) Ensure the *interdependence* (not *independence*!) of members of the Body on one another and the Holy Spirit; and, 4) Serve as a source of individual Identity for members of the Body that transcends fleshly traits (e.g. Jew or Greek, slave or free).
- When we learn to contextualize *everything* in terms of the purpose of life, we necessarily include our approach to ministry.





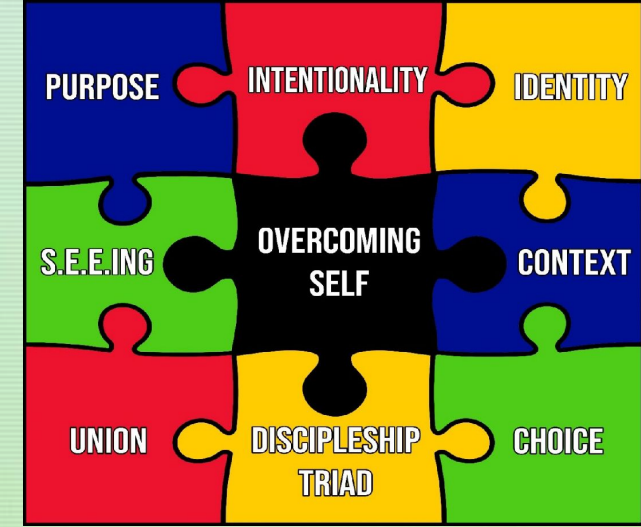
# D5: Thinking About the Unthinkable

- Wrestling w/ difficult ideas is what kings *do* because it gets them out of their comfort zone and moves them into their growth zone.
- **John 17:22** forks the road between M/OTM and Union: By His prayer, Jesus is reinforcing His “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” declaration from **Matthew 19:26**. The challenge functions as a screening process for those who will and will not embrace the unlikely quest of pushing the boundaries between dimensions and kingdoms. Jesus’ Model Prayer included a request that Papa’s will be done “on earth as it is in Heaven” (**Matthew 6:10**); it is a request to reproduce eternal reality in this world...**Luke 17:20-21** that “The Kingdom of God does not come with observation...For, indeed, *the Kingdom of God is within you.*” An internal Kingdom requires an internal search and involves senses other than those with which we perceive the external world. The quest for connecting with the Kingdom within requires leaving behind what is familiar, venturing out from what is known, traditional, and *especially what is religious*. It is to enter the uncharted, the risky, the unseen. Why? Because familiar, known, sheltered, and traditional are all knowledge connected with the flesh, and flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (**1 Corinthians 15:50**). Our “me/other-than-me” independence instincts are enormously strong, pervasive, and dominate all but the most heart-set intentions to know Union.



# “Extra Credit” Question!

- Jesus used air/wind as a metaphor for Spirit in **John 3:8**. Meditate on the “This is the Air I Breathe” example of individual union. How does this example convey the unthinkable truth about our individual union into Collective Oneness? How does it help you understand how something can be bigger than you and part of you simultaneously? How does this thinking challenge the Me/Other than Me mindset? How does this truth demonstrate the meaning of **Acts 17:28**, “for in Him we live and move and have our being”? How does the example from the woodshop illustrate collective oneness?



# Next Week: S.E.E.ing

