

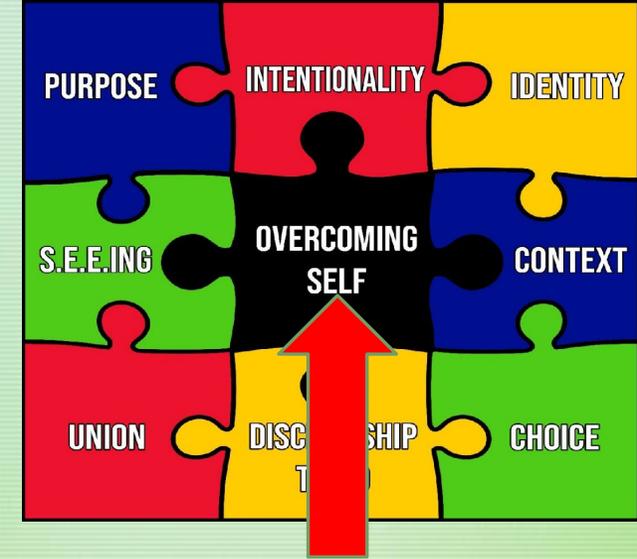
The Strategic Discipleship Workbook

Session Eleven: Overcoming Self

Overcoming Self

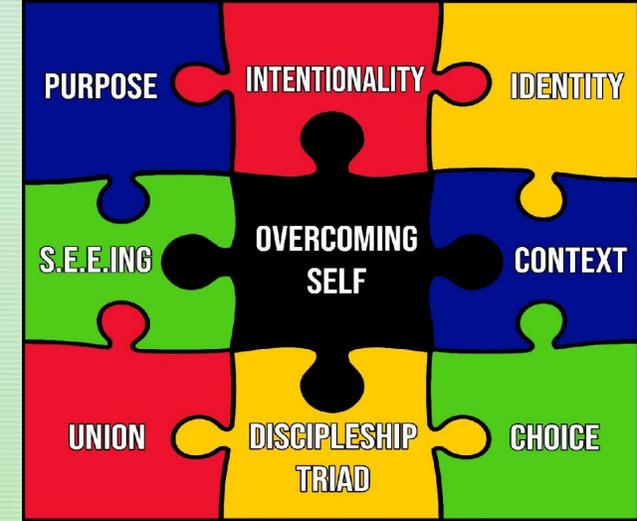
- Overcoming Self: the puzzle piece that touches all the others.
- This world's truth: Self-interest poses as normal/expected behavior
- NEWSFLASH! Independent Self (IS) has no place in the eternal realm! "Overcoming" is more than a cool Christian buzzword!
- We begin life as IS and have to learn to overcome; Transformation measured in "Union Units."
- Nothing stops discipleship in its tracks like refusal to face the truth honestly.
- Other "Central Puzzle Pieces I have seen:

- "Pandering-to-self" Self
- "Caving-in-to-self" Self
- "It-sucks-to-be-me" Self
- "Celebrating-myself" Self
- "Self-as-god" Self
- "Self-important" Self
- "Everybody-look-at-me" Self
- "God's-gift-to-women/men" Self
- "You-need-to-be-like-me" Self
- "Celebrating-myself" Self
- "Don't-bother-me-I'm-doing-God's-work" Self
- "Get-in-line-and-take-a-number" Self
- "Politically-and-humanistically-correct" Self
- "Your-not-as-smart-as-me" Self
- "Don't you wish you were me" Self
- "Let-me-fix-you" Self
- "I-may-not-always-be-right-but-I-am-never-wrong" Self
- "My-stuff-is-cooler-than-your-stuff" Self
- "Life-for-its-own-sake" Self



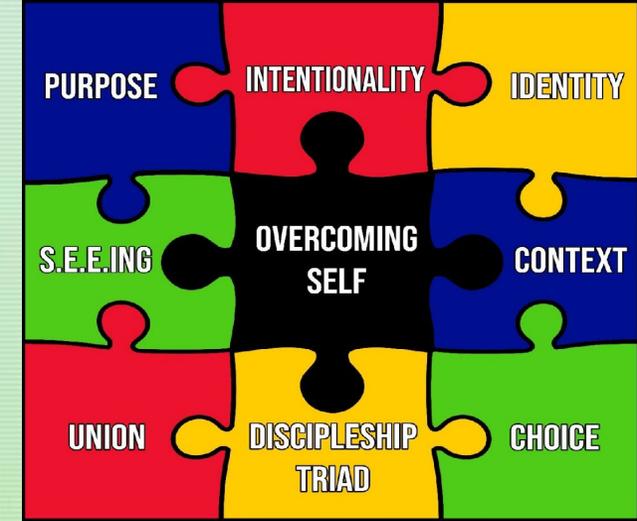
Overcoming Self (Cont'd)

- **Matthew 7:16-18:** Every person on the face of the earth abides in some vine somewhere. “Abiding” is not a one-time choice, like praying the Sinner’s Prayer. Abiding is an all-day, everyday series of Choices, the sum of which comprise your discipleship progress.
- Overcoming Self is overcoming separation, and overcoming separation is required to make the “abiding in the Vine” connection. Identity, life source, persona, activities, "stuff," & more become assimilated into “I AM”—IS to Collective Self
- Review of Lucifer’s Rebellion (**Isaiah 14:13-14**): “For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation, on the farthest sides of the north; ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be *like the Most High*.’”
- Review of Eve’s Deception: “For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will *be like God*, knowing good and evil.” Lies are most believable if they only slightly alter the truth. Every lie told since the Big Lie has been designed to preserve separation and enthrone the *IS*, even the religious lie of “you can/should like God.”



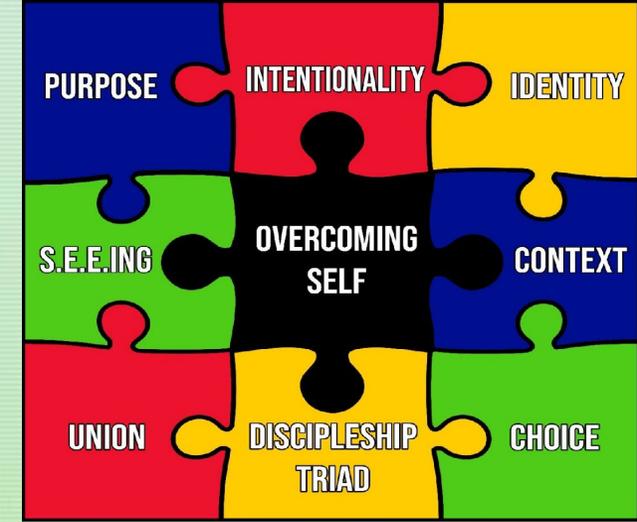
D1: What is Overcoming?

- “After Jesus’ complete and vanquishing victory over sin, death, over the gates of Hell; after making a spectacle of the enemy, and overcoming the world system; after taking back His people and His creation—*what is left for us to overcome?*”
- Our journey is through the wilderness, into our promised inheritance, and into battle with our carnal mind, the flesh, separated thinking, and independence. Our Promised Land is full of giants, and the biggest, strongest, most entrenched giant of them all is the Independent Self (*IS*).
- Read Pg. 122, paragraphs 2 and 3 together and discuss.
- Romans 8:28—**FIND** the good, **WORK** the good.



D2: The Problem of Pain

- *Suffering and emotional pain are not optional, but learning from them is!* Learning must be chosen and embraced to be *successful*.
- Bearing your cross daily means to lift the instrument of your death to your shoulders and walk with it for one day! Crosses, like emotional pain (EP), should not be collected because we tend to fashion our used cross into a crutch.
- "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him *deny himself*, and *take up his cross daily*, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23).
- **Hebrews 12:11 Principle:** "Pain *now*, fruit *afterward*." We birth the children we love by enduring the pain *first*, and we instruct our children, "*First dinner, then dessert!*"
- Life is a classroom designed to transform us into Christ's image, and struggle/discipline are the fertilizers that sustain and nourish the growth of the seed of the Kingdom. No creeping caterpillar ever transformed into a beautiful, awe-inspiring butterfly without passing through the struggle of the cocoon phase.
- Read pg. 128, last paragraph together and discuss.



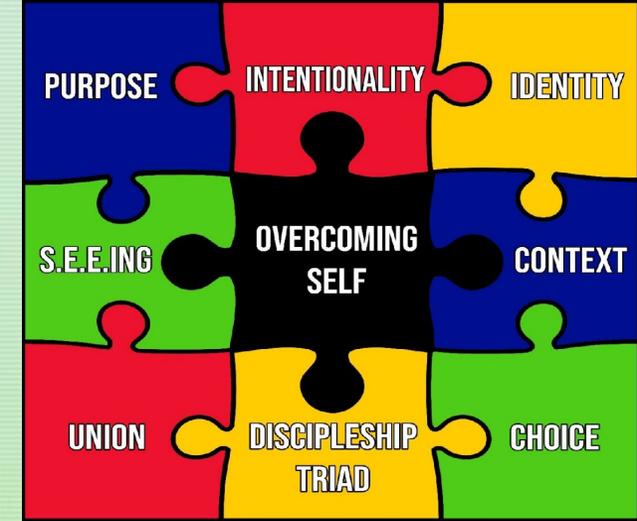
D3: Overcoming By Working Out

- Purification Tool of Choice: Fire
- Effects of Suffering:

1. Suffering humbles us. We have a habit of slopping our way through life and getting more and more ego-centric and selfish until something stops us in our tracks. That something often is the realization that we do not operate in the level of control that we think we have. Suffering lets the air out of our inflated ego. The humble man or woman's response to suffering is always, "Father knows best."

2. Suffering gets our attention. Suffering induces a "burst of focus" toward that which is important. We often are so distracted, so scattered by life, so busy with urgent activities that we end up ignoring important things. Even if we retain partial focus on spiritual development, we tend to prioritize it in the context of many things competing for our attention. One of my favorite sayings is, "Nothing focuses the attention as well as the hangman's noose [suffering]!" Distractions blur into the background, and we begin to search for means to alleviate the pain. Most often, the healthy answer to that search is found in some life lessons that Papa is teaching at the time.

3. Suffering causes us to cry out. The Psalms give us examples of King David's response to suffering: To "cry out," "call out," or "shout out," often with tears. There is no shame in calling for help. It is the Independent Self that tells us we are the Rock of Gibraltar, standing alone against the world. *But we have a fortress, a Strong Tower, and suffering alerts us to the need to run to it (Proverbs 18:19)!*



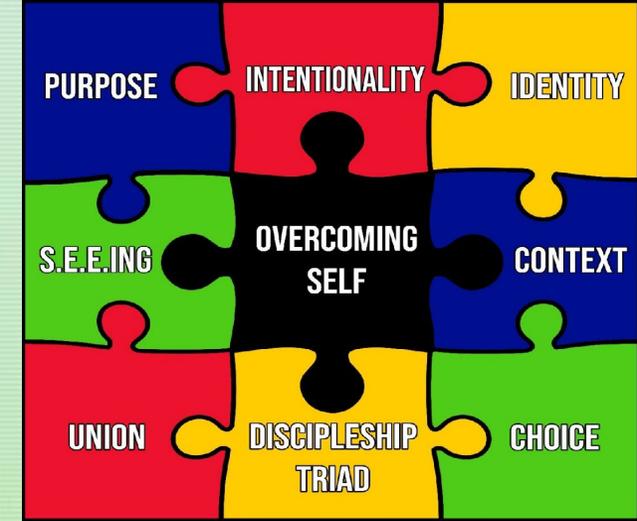
D3: Overcoming By Working Out (Cont'd)

4. *Suffering tunes us into the “God frequency.”* We become more receptive to listening in those times when we feel the burn. The world is a manic, hysterical place that is in a state beyond uproar. Activities and the flesh clamor for attention, and the world insists that we take up its particular cause and feel its indignant offense. But God’s voice is not in the wind, fire, or earthquake. Suffering teaches us to still our inner man, tune our ear to the “still, small voice,” and wait for instructions.

5. *Suffering reminds us of who we are.* We know in our hearts that we are not accountable to those not in a position to discipline us. Parentage conveys authority, and that is the principle we see in **Hebrews 12:7-11**. So, if we can find no other comfort in our suffering, we can at least embrace that Papa’s discipline is proof that He has embraced us, that He retains authority over us, and that we are members of His household.

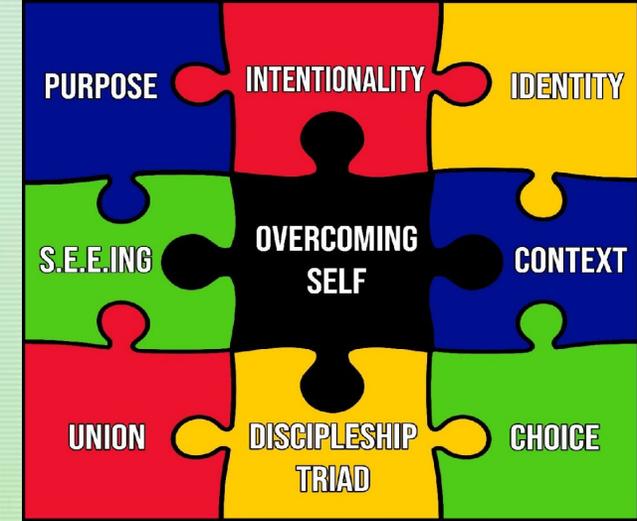
6. *Suffering proves we are on the right path.* **Hebrews 12:6-7** confirms that, as long as we are feeling the pressure of suffering, we may be assured that our paths are directed and ordered by the Lord (**Psalms 37:23**). **1 John 2:5** gives us precious information: “*By this, we know that we are in Him.*” When He deals with us as sons, He teaches us His words and ways. And, as we see His perfection being duplicated in us, we know we are on the path to life.

- The most difficult circumstance is not the short, ultra-intense sprint; it is long-term obedience in the same direction, putting one obedient foot in front of the other, day-after-day, year-after-year, through heartache, suffering, joy, and celebration.



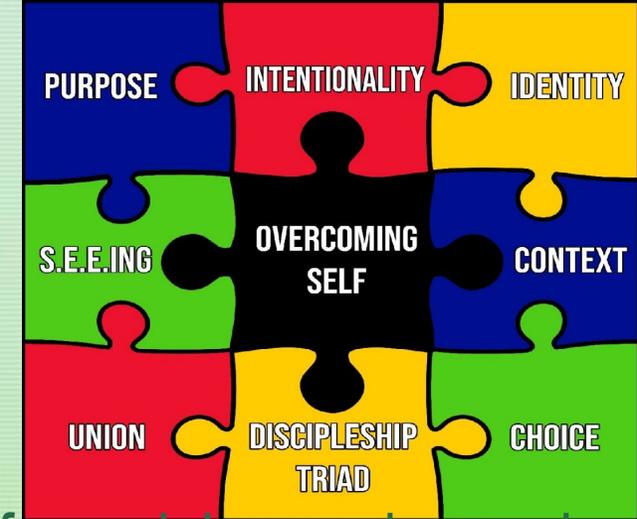
D4: “It’s Not Fair!” & Discontent

- 2 carnal mind Choices are *always* a trap: Self-pity and victim-ness. They are rampant, and they serve only one purpose: To take our eyes off the Context of Papa’s growth process in us and put them on circumstances that we perceive to be unfair.
- No such thing as an “objective” fairness standard!
- Getting what we “deserve”
- Comment: I know I am making progress in my quest to overcome self when I learn to quit making everything about me, my circumstances, about fairness and personal justice, when I can say *with contentment*, “God is Good” without adding, “to me,” even subconsciously.
- Fairness is irrelevant in our circumstances because they are like test questions: They are what they are. It is the Teacher’s prerogative to make the test; and when the Holy Spirit makes a test for you, it is precisely fitted for your knowledge base, and serves the purpose of growing us in areas of need.
- “Somebody’s gonna pay!” ignores the fact that “Somebody” already *HAS* paid!



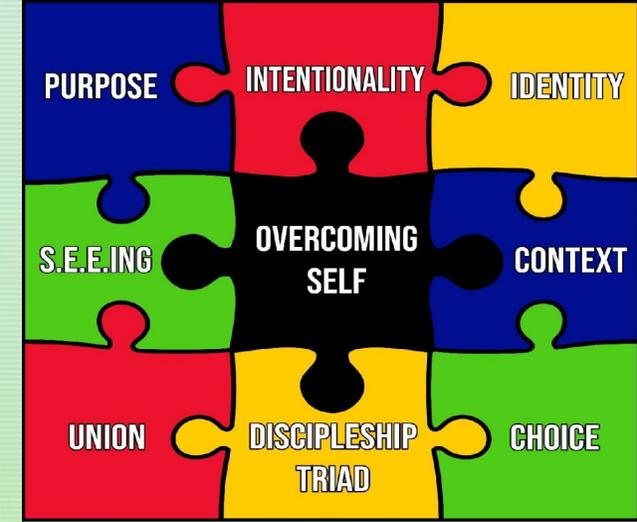
D5: Fudging

- The Optimism Bias: People exaggerate their probability of success, the quality of their effort, & exaggerate compliance with known measurable standards. Call it, “The Fudge Factor” (TFF).
- TFF is one unconscious strategy to stave off the pain of our non-performance, the domination of our flesh, and the stalemate of remaining unchanged year after year.
- "Fudging" is not just an occasional exaggeration; it is a distorted view of life.
- We credit ourselves with praise-worthy performance if we *intended* good, even if our delivery was something less. We tend to “round up to the next higher motivation”; and when we consistently overestimate, we accumulate error that distorts accuracy.
- A life strategy/habit of fudging is anti-intentionality. It depends upon generalization as a practice/perspective. Never getting specific is the key that allows us to escape unscathed with our claims of performance. As long as I am not required to be specific, I can escape accountability. As long as I am not held to account for any particular part, I can claim to be successful on the whole.

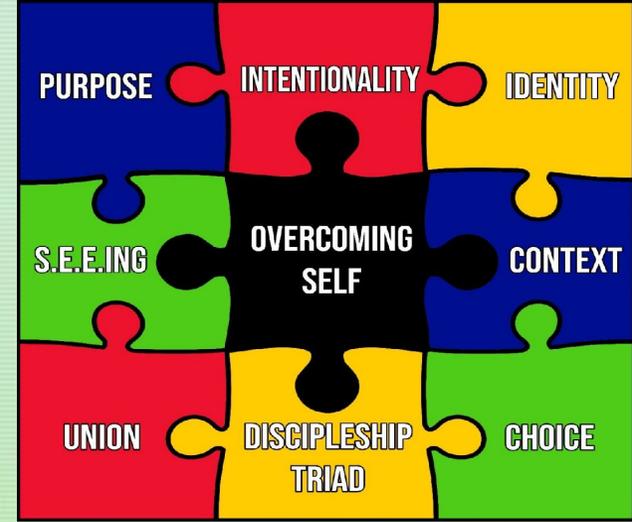


D5: Fudging (Cont'd)

- As long as I am not held to account for any particular part, I can claim to be successful on the whole.
- Without accountability there is no motivation for change.
- To see accurately one must see specifically and in detail.
- If we accept/embrace that Jesus' loving attention is primarily for changing and transforming us into His image, we must acknowledge that TFF is the enemy of that change.
- When we commit to self-examination, we fulfill Jesus' mandate to, "First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (**Matthew 7:5**).
- Definition of Integrity: What you do with what you know. Integrity is about execution, not just knowledge. I cannot ensure integrity in my actions unless I regularly take the measure of both my actions *and* my motivations. Execution is also the plain message of Jesus' words in **John 13:17**, "If you *know* these things, *blessed are you if you do them.*"



Epilogue: Forsaking Christianity



Next Week: ???

