

"OMNIALLINFINITUDE™ builds a bridge on which my head and my heart can shake hands. It combines deep principles with ancient practices, and is a pathway to knowing God in order to love Him. I encourage you to walk the path; cross the bridge."

Dr. Jim Altizer Azusa Pacific University

Hot, Hot, Hot

journey elements

What Comes to Your Mind?
Remember: Psalm 94:2-3
Read: Romans 3, 8, 12
Journal 8.1: Problem Solved
Analyze: Core Concepts
Journal 8.2: Anger Management
Investigate: Wrath
10 things
Journal 8.3: Holy Intolerance
Practice: Secrecy
Why?
Journal 8.4: Real Life Consequences
Inventory: Your Time
Journal 8.5: Where Have All the Flowers Gone?
Adventuring: God at the Movies
Journal 8:6 I Object!
Lyrics: Help!, Eve of Destruction, God's Not Dead
More Cool Stuff: Life after Life
Journal 8.7: Nitty Gritty
Closure
<u>Appendix</u>
Credits

what comes to your mind?

Hot, Hot, Hot

Hot summer nights with red hot tempers
When the hot blooded get hot headed
Having a hot time in the old town tonight.
The hot shots are hot dogging with the cops in hot pursuit
And everyone ends up in hot water.

But not the hot guys and gals
With their hot wheels
Looking all hot - at all the hot spots.
They're checking out all the hot properties
Wanting to strike while the iron is hot.
Hot Mamas, in their hot pants, getting all hot and heavy
And once again everyone ends up in hot water.
(And we're not talking about a hot tub.)

Let's order in some Hot Chocolate and Hot Buttered Rum, Hot dogs and Hot Fudge Sundaes. Send over some Hot Peppers with Hot Tamales and Hot Sauce. Throw in some hot and spicy hotcakes. Eat all that and you'll be crying hot tears. And once again everyone ends up in hot water. (And we're not talking about a hot bath.)

It's hot as Hades in here.
For good reason – we're in the hothouse,
The one with the hot tin roof.
The hot topic is how to get out of this hot water.
It's a real hot potato – no one wants to venture a guess.
How did we get here?
Who can show us the way out?

All of a sudden, up ahead, a door opens.
"Over Here" says a very glorious looking Man.
"I AM the way out."
"Follow me."
"My name is Jesus."
It's only going to get hotter down here.

remember



Psalm 94: 2-3

"Rise up, O Judge of the earth; pay back to the proud what they deserve. How long will the wicked, O LORD, how long will the wicked be jubilant? NIV

Use the space below to help you memorize the verse above. For additional background on the <u>remember</u> element, see the <u>appendix</u>.

Now write out the verses from:

Journey 1: Psalm 145:3

Journey 2: Exodus 3: 14a

Journey 3: Revelation 1:8

Journey 4: Jeremiah 29:11

Journey 5: Joshua 1:9

Journey 6: Psalm 145:8-9

Journey 7: Hebrews 7:26

read

Romans 3, 8, 12



Please read all the above chapters through completely on three separate days, once from a **modern translation** such as the *NIV* or *NAS*, once in a **modern paraphrase** such as *The Message*, and then **once again with a pad and pencil** by your side as you record your thoughts and observations. It is also helpful to **read the selections aloud**. As you read, <u>underline</u> words that describe who God is or names He is called.

This element is about **reading what it says** – try to put aside any preconceived ideas about what you think it says, or what you may have concluded based on other studies or classes. We are not saying those ideas are wrong, but for this Element, we just want to read it as if for the first time. Please **read for the storyline** – and see if you can then faithfully retell it in your own words.

First Reading: Modern Translation – which one did you use?

Second Reading: Modern Paraphrase – which one did you use?

Third Reading: Reading Notes

Romans 3:

Romans 8:

Romans 12:		
Descriptions of God:		
Names used for Code		
Names used for God:		

journal

8.1 Problem Solved

We have come a long way on our Spiritual Journey.

Our most recent discovery was that our One and Only, Most High, Creator God had a solution in place for our sin problem all along.

The One who is Beyond Time and Space, eternal, infinite, unlimited and never changing......He provided the answer to the problem of evil and sin and all the heartache and suffering it brings on creation.

The One with unlimited power, knowledge, wisdom and control, the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe, He alone could offer the redeeming resolution to Adam and Eve's wrong choice in the Garden. He sent His own Son, Jesus, to earth, to be our High Priest, to pay our penalty, to sacrifice Himself for our PAID IN FULL sins.

The Faithful and Trustworthy One kept His Promises. The Goodness of God provided the means for us to obtain the Highest Good – life forever with Him, the Good Life.

Blood had to be shed to pay the ransom for our sins, conquering death and destroying evil. His Holiness, Righteousness and Justice set the bar so high only Jesus could satisfy. Through His Death and Resurrection, we gain access to God, real life, and eternity with Him. Nothing else is needed, no more sacrifices.

Jesus died in my place, paid for me, saved me.

But from what? What did Jesus save us from? How bad is it?

Really, really bad.



He saved us from the righteous wrath of God – His Holiness Justly responding to our sin.

One God – The Almighty One Problem - Sin and Evil One Solution - Jesus' Sacrifice One Victory - Jesus' Resurrection

Two Futures – I get to choose.

He saved us from eternity in Hell. He saved us for eternity in Heaven.

Your turn:

Compare righteous anger and unrighteous anger. Give some examples of each.



Core Concepts

For this exercise we will do a deeper analysis of some of the Core Concepts of Christianity. Write down what you learned about the following subjects from reading Romans 3 and 8.

Sin, Sinful Man, Sinful Nature:
- 1
The Law:
Righteousness:
Jesus, The Son:
The Spirit:
Benefits and Promises to you and me:

journal

8.2 Anger Management

Talk about uncomfortable. We do not like to think about the wrath of an angry God at all.



It embarrasses us – seems barbarous, unloving, uncivilized, outrageous and cruel...very ungodlike. God seems out of control, overly emotional, with wounded pride and a bad temper. This certainly isn't a very popular idea and many have difficulty defending it in our culture today.

How ironic that we, as imperfect, finite creatures, trying to comprehend the infinite, transcendent, One and Only God, end up becoming His judge by pretending to take the moral high ground.

Once again we are caught transferring our own imperfections and limitations onto God, seeing

Him in our image, instead of ourselves in His.

Anger is amoral. God created us with the ability to experience anger and use it for his Glory, but unfortunately, in our selfishness, pride, envy, fear and greed, our anger is anything but godly or righteous. Anger motivates us to sinful thoughts and deeds. It controls us, drives us, destroys us.

Why are we so angry?

Most often anger stems from an actual or perceived violation of our personal rights or boundaries. A personal right is a rule I have made up which I expect others to obey. A personal boundary is a rule I make up for myself to obey.

Something happens that shouldn't happen. Something didn't happen that should have happened. We had already decided what should and should not be, playing God. Then our anger brings us feelings of justification and self righteousness. Oftentimes we try to control it and then anger erupts from the straw that broke the camel's back - from something insignificant and unrelated.

We can't get our way. We want what we want. We feel disrespected, lied to, hurt, violated. We didn't deserve to be treated that way. We were abused and taken advantage of. We compare, become jealous, covet, and envy. And the list goes on......and then develops into family traditions of anger, unresolved hurts from the past, unforgiveness and bitterness.

Instead – the Bible encourages us to: "Be angry but do not sin." Eph. 4:26.

"You must be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires." James. 1:19-20

"Show mercy to others, but do so with great caution, hating the sins that contaminate their lives." Jude 1:23

Anger and hatred......both elements of the wrath of God. Both perfectly and righteously directed against sin and evil.

Your turn:

List some things that make you angry. List some things that you hate. How do you act or react on your anger or hate? How does this impact your life?



investigate Wrath

Define: Please write a brief definition next to each of the above words using a regular dictionary, not a Bible dictionary. (Click on any word to link to dictionary.com)

Wrath <u>Anger</u> <u>Hatred</u> <u>Ire</u> Fear **Vengeance** Revenge Retribution ∞ **Punishment** <u>Judgment</u> <u>Hell</u> Wicked <u>Perish</u> **Disobedience** Guilty

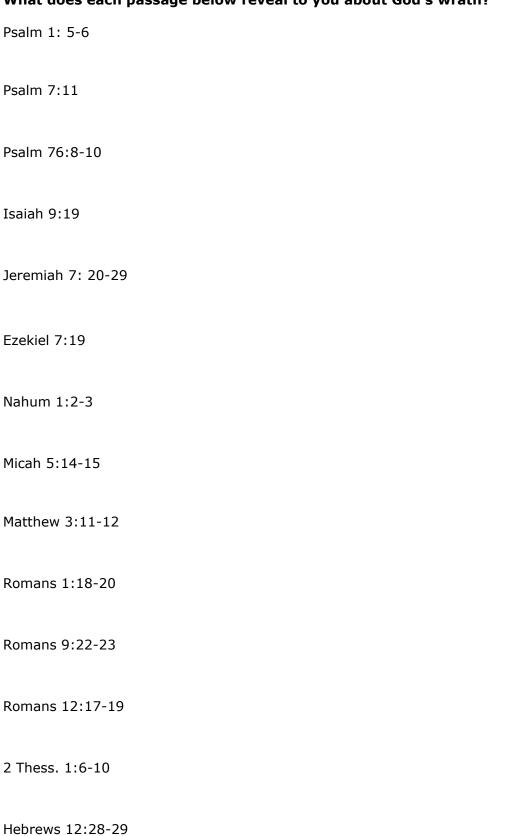
Death

<u>Evil</u>

Now write your own definition for Hot, Hot, Hot below:

Review:

What does each passage below reveal to you about God's wrath?



Read the following verses, and for each one explain what angered God and how he expressed His wrath.

Genesis 3: 13-24 Genesis 6: 11-13, 17-18 Genesis 11: 4-9 Genesis 18: 20, 19:24-28 Exodus 7: 1-6 Numbers 14: 6-35 Numbers 20: 6-12 2 Samuel 12: 7-14 Mark 11: 15-18 Matthew 27: 45-54 Acts 5: 1-10 Revelation 18:2-8 Conclude: List some of the causes of God's expressing His wrath.

List some of the consequences of God's Wrath.

List some of the ways to escape God's wrath.

10 things

Hot, Hot, Hot

- 1. **Esh Oklah** is the name for God that translates Consuming Fire, describing a God who will ultimately destroy whatever is opposed to his holiness. Images of fire such as the Burning Bush and the Pillar of Fire are used throughout the Word to describe how God manifested Himself to his people. He is also referred to as a Refiner's Fire purifying the lives of believers for His purposes. His purposes are always restorative as He constantly seeks to draw us back to Himself. ¹
- 2. **Arthur Pink** "The wrath of God is his eternal detestation of all unrighteousness. It is the displeasure and indignation of Divine equity against evil. It is the holiness of God stirred into activity against sin." ²
- 3. J. I. Packer –"God's wrath in the Bible is never the capricious, self indulgent, irritable, morally ignoble thing that human anger so often is. It is, instead, a right and necessary reaction to objective moral evil." ³
- 4. Mark Shaw "God's wrath flows from his love, for the presence of deep love necessitates the hatred of that which threatens or opposes what is loved. The love of life necessitates the hatred of death. The love of fidelity necessitates the hatred of infidelity. So the Trinity's infinite love for one another necessitates a wrath and hatred against anything that would dishonor, diminish, or decline to enjoy the persons of the divine family." ⁴
- 5. A. W. Tozer "Every wrathful judgment in the history of the world has been a holy act of preservation. The holiness of God, the wrath of God, and the health of the creation are inseparably united. God's wrath is His utter intolerance of whatever degrades and destroys."⁵
- 6. **Stephen Charnock** "The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind. The anger of the Lord is often compared to a storm, clouds of judgment, turning day into night, with no notice, confounding things and jumbling them together." ⁶
- 7. **Solomon** "When the storm has swept by, the wicked are gone, but the righteous stand firm forever." Proverbs 10: 25 NIV
- 8. **Tim Keller** "The Bible says that God's wrath flows from his love and delight in his creation. He is angry at evil and injustice because it is destroying its peace and integrity." ⁷
- 9. God's wrath is not an embarrassment to Him, and neither should it be for us.
- 10. **Jesus' greatest suffering came** on the cross when he was the object of all the Father's wrath meant for us, both present and to come.

Your turn:

Pick one or two of the above quotes or statements and share any insights or challenges it presents to you.

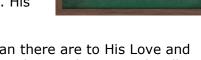
journal

8.3 Holy Intolerance

So, it's OK for us to get angry, but not God? Yet, He has the only true right or reason to show righteous anger or wrath. If God did not punish evildoers, He would be compromising with wickedness and condoning sin.

His Wrath is His Just response to sin, evil and disobedience. His Holy Intolerance, His Judgment, High Standards, Absolute Righteousness and Truth require His Wrath to punish sin.

His Wrath is His Holiness stirred into activity against sin. Not just the horribly gross and tragic sins, but any sin, anywhere, by anybody. His Holiness cannot tolerate any sin in His presence.



Zero

Tolerance

In the Bible there are more references to God's wrath and fury than there are to His Love and tenderness. Yet today it is largely ignored. It seems so unenlightened to modern man, hardly fair, and certainly not sophisticated. No one has ever liked the wrath of God, for good reason.

And no one wants to hear about it.

Yet His wrath is judicial as all who experience it – deserve it. God is just and there are no special deals. No one gets off the hook.

He is also patient and long suffering and merciful. He does not want any to perish and so gives many chances for repentance.

He warns us over and over again of the consequences of our sinful lives. He provides us a way out, a way back to him, a new life, a different eternity.

He may tolerate sin for a season, but eventually His Wrath will be released. **Slowly, controlled, almost reluctantly, it will come.**

- Adam and Eve were cursed. (Genesis 3)
- The builders of the Tower of Babel were scattered and confused. (Genesis 11)
- The world of Noah was destroyed by a flood. (Genesis 6-9)
- Sodom and Gomorrah were incinerated. (Genesis 19)
- Pharaoh's Egypt was devastated by 10 plagues. (Exodus 7-12)
- The Israelites were punished more than once, killed, captured, conquered and exiled.
- Moses was not allowed into the Promised Land. (Numbers 20)
- David lost his own son and was not allowed to build the Temple of God. (2 Samuel 11-12)
- Jesus Christ on the cross received God's wrath for all sin ever committed.

Earthquakes, floods, fire, darkness, plagues, insects, lions, disease, famine, drought, weather, captivity, conquering armies, governments and angels have all been used to deliver God's wrath.

We dislike wrath so much, it causes many of us to deny the existence of God altogether. If He does not exist, we can do whatever we please. We think we can make God to suit ourselves, make Him a little more presentable, more like us.

But while we minimize, excuse and deny our sins, God hates them.

The news is really, really, bad. Worse than we could ever imagine.

The wrath of God is a fact and not a defect in the character of God.

To fully appreciate the Good News of Jesus, you have to first understand the Bad News of Sin and Death.

We have been duly warned.

Your turn:

How do we compromise with evil or wickedness?



practice

Secrecy



Living Free from what others think

People Pleasers, Look at Me!, Showing off, Tooting my own Horn, Managing our Image, Taking Credit, Being Seen, Making a Good Impression, Hanging with the Right Crowd, Making the A List, Being in the IN Crowd, Commanding respect,

All these and more are symptoms of lives in desperate need of the Practice of Secrecy.

Trying too hard to look good.

Some of us care too much about what others think. We are constantly comparing, competing, trying to impress, envious of others, and end up in bondage, captive to what others think, say, or believe about us.

It always starts with the comparing, measuring ourselves and our accomplishments against those of others, never being satisfied. We begin to shade the truth, embellishing, exaggerating, making excuses, justifying ourselves with endless explanations of our true motives, hiding our true selves. This exhausting and endless process eventually leads us to resent the very people whose approval we seek.

We want to be noticed for what we do well.

We will also avoid saying what we truly think if it might bring disapproval from those we value. While praise, affirmation, and encouragement are good things, necessary to learn to both give and receive, instead we are to focus our efforts on the giving part, while learning to receive graciously when it is given to us.

We seek approval based on our accomplishments in a variety of areas:

- How much money we have, earn, spend, etc.
- Our social status, club, neighborhood, selective groups
- What we own and if we own it first
- Our beauty, fitness, sex appeal
- Our accomplishments or heroism
- Our popularity
- Our career advancement, success, or achievements
- Our education
- Greater numbers or record breaking, awards
- Compliments, tweets, Facebook Friends, LIKES
- Struggles or trials we have recovered from
- News coverage and fame, followers, rankings



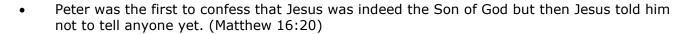
This very same highly sought approval will also come crashing down when any criticism, isolation, and judgment is received. We tend to **confuse our performance or approval by others with our worth as people**, instead of looking to God for the satisfaction only He can provide.

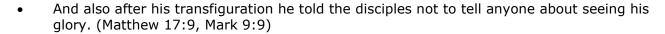
The antidote to all this is the Practice of Secrecy, which leaves it up to God alone to decide what should and should not be noticed by others. It is the opposite of our constant approval seeking and image management, since it teaches us to enjoy being anonymous, freeing us from the impact opinions of others have over our lives.

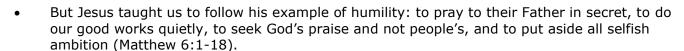
John 12:43 states the problem very simply. "For they loved human praise more than they love God."

Jesus is our example in word and deed

- Prior to his very first miracle, turning water into wine, Jesus told his mother it was not yet His time to go public with His Mission and Being. (John 2:1-2)
- He repeatedly went away by himself to "lonely places" to pray to the Father in secret (Luke 5:16, 6:12, Mark 1:35, 6:45-46).
- When Jesus entered towns he often tried to keep it a secret that he was there. (Mark 7:24).
- After teaching the swelling crowds in town after town, he would then withdraw by himself or with his disciples. (Luke 4:42)
- Jesus told his brothers his time had not yet come and that He was not on public display. (John 7:1-9)
- When Jesus healed people he often told them to keep it a secret (Mark 1:44, 5:43, 7:36, 8:26).
- Jesus even told the demons to keep quiet about who He really was. (Mark 1:25, 34, 3:12)







Paul reminds us that God decides when our deeds will be known and when our light will be noticed in Philippians 2. Peter and James confirm that humility is the main ingredient in a closer walk with God. (James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:6)

And Secrecy is one of the main ingredients of humility. Without secrecy it's impossible to be humble. Likewise, all those who are genuinely humble, practice the discipline of secrecy.



Benefits of Practicing Secrecy

Eventually, very slowly, the practice of Secrecy will change our lives from the inside out. The spiritual practices are not an end in themselves, but are to allow us to grow spiritually in different areas. This practice deals with the area of humility and pride.

This does not mean we do not present our best, be our best, and do our best. This does not mean you must do everything in secret or that you can never talk about yourself. The goal is to place our need for God's approval over our need for the approval of other people.

Eventually we will see the following changes begin to appear in our lives.

- We lose desire for fame, justification, or attention from others and refocus our efforts on pleasing God.
- Our Walk of Faith stabilizes as our relationship with God becomes independent of the opinions of others.
- We rise above the Praise and Blame Game we play with ourselves and others
- Our Humility increases because, like John the Baptist, Jesus can only increase as we decrease.
- Secrecy becomes a tangible expression of our abiding trust in God.
- Giving away something helps us to be less enslaved by it we experience freedom and joy.
- It is ok to receive praise, encouragement and affirmation. In fact, God encourages us to give that to others, so He will encourage others to give it to us.

Practicing Secrecy

The practice of secrecy involves two different elements.

We are to abstain from causing our good deeds or qualities from becoming known.

This helps us to move closer to that illusive quality of humility and takes away any reward of fame or recognition. Eventually our reward will simply be the thrill of giving, period. The motive will be to obey and please God, and not to gain approval, recognition, make a good impression, or expect a reciprocal deed done for us.

We are to free ourselves from the need to be our own public relations firm.

Much of our conversation tends to be about justifying our actions, thoughts, situations, opinions, as well as promoting ourselves and what we have done, own, and know. The focus is always on us, where Jesus wants our focus to be on God and others. We will never be able to please everyone. There will always be someone who looks better than us.



Ways to Begin to Practice Secrecy

- 1. **Pay attention to your conversations** and notice how much you talk about yourself. Also pay attention to how you listen, what you are thinking about while someone else is talking.
- 2. Pay attention to how often you do the following to improve your image: blame others, diminish others, justify your actions, make excuses, seek the limelight, compete with others, seek the last word, prove your point at all costs, bring the conversation back to yourself.
- 3. **Do a good deed in secret:** Absolutely no one can know. Be prepared to share how hard it was to do, and how you felt after. These can be done intentionally for someone with a great need, or anonymously and randomly. Some ideas to start with are listed below.
 - Pay someone's rent or other bill
 - Leave groceries on someone's front porch
 - Mail someone cash make sure there is no return address on the envelope.
 - Pay for food at another table in a restaurant
 - Pay for the person behind you (or two or three cars behind you) in the drive thru line or the bridge/highway toll lane
 - Mow someone's lawn
 - Leave a gift on someone's desk, porch, in their car, purse, etc.
 - Make an anonymous donation to a fund for someone in great need (medical, disaster, etc.)
 - Buy something you know someone really wants/needs and have it delivered anonymously
 - Leave a gift for the next person in the bathroom stall
 - Order takeout food for delivery and have it sent to someone else. Make sure you pay for it.
 - Pick a day and do good deeds for those around you without letting them know you are watching and waiting to serve them. The secret in this case is your motives and that you have no personal agenda. Anticipate every need.
- 4. **Pray for others** to be more outstanding, more praised, more useful of God than yourself. Rejoice in their success.
- 5. **Allow God to tell others about your needs.** God provides faithfully for those who trust Him and in return our faith is greatly increased in God.
- 6. **If you use social media**, begin to pay attention to what and why you post, comment, LIKE, SHARE, Tweet, etc. How can this reveal ways we manage our image. How can we use these tools in a less self glorifying, more positive way?

You get the idea. This will take some planning and scheming. Have fun! Remember no one can ever know.

Personal Reflections on Secrecy:

1.	According to the following verses, what should our motivation be for our good works, success, achievements, performance, etc.?
	Proverbs 16:3:
	Matthew 5:14-16:
	1 Corinthians 10:31:
	Colossians 3:17:
	Colossians 3:23:
2.	List some of the ways you manage your own public relations or image.
2	Whose approval do you seek and why?
J.	whose approval do you seek and why:
4.	Are you more apt to Praise or Blame? Build yourself up or tear someone else down? Brag or
	criticize?
5.	What did you learn through "paying attention to your conversations" with others?

6. What part of the "doing a good deed in secret" blessed you the most? What was the most difficult part? Will you do it again?
7. Do you believe God will tell others about your needs? How does this motivate you to respond when God tells you about someone else's needs?
8. If we do our good deeds with the proper Godly motivations, they will shine all on their own. What happens when they shine? Who is responsible for when the recognition comes?
why? Secrecy

Dallas Willard – "Secrecy at its best teaches love and humility before God and others. And that

love and humility encourages us to see our associates in the best possible light, even to the point of our hoping they will do better and appear better than us." ⁸

Jesus – "Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven." Matthew 6:1 NIV

John Ortberg – "When you are in your twenties, someone once wrote, you live to please other people. When you are in your thirties, you get tired of trying to please others, so you get miffed with them for making you worry about it. When you are in your forties, you realize nobody was thinking about you anyway." ⁹

Paul – "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves." Philippians 2:3 NIV

Jesus – "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your right hand know what your left hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Matthew 6: 2-4 NIV

Don Carson – "We start out for the goal of pleasing the Father, but it's soon traded in for its pygmy cousin, the goal of pleasing men. We start off with the goal of genuine holiness, and end up settling for external piety." ¹⁰

Secrecy leads to uprooting hypocrisy. We eventually begin to do the right things for the right reasons instead of the wrong reasons.

Jesus – "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done is secret, will reward you." Matthew 6: 5-6 NIV

Dallas Willard – "One of the greatest fallacies of our faith, and actually one of the greatest acts of unbelief, is the thought that our spiritual acts and virtues need to be advertised to be known."¹¹

Your turn:

Pick one or two of the above quotes or statements and share any insights or challenges it presents to you.

journal

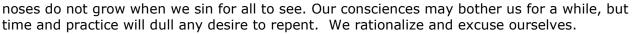
8.4 Real Life Consequences

While most of us will never experience the **cataclysmic wrath** of God where He breaks into human history and destroys the ungodly in mass and in an instant.....we all may experience two more subtle forms of His wrath in our everyday lives: **Sowing and Reaping** and **Abandonment**.

Sowing and Reaping refers to the concept of reaping what you sow......logical consequences

or the results of your behavior that come back to impact your life and those of your friends and family. With repentance of sin, God gives the grace to go through these times, causing spiritual growth and wisdom. There are consequences to sin in this life that even though you repented and been forgiven, God may allow to remain in effect.

Often we are oblivious to the consequences of sin because most don't materialize until even years later. We do not feel the immediate burn of touching the hot stove. Unlike Pinocchio, our



Everyone else is doing it. I'm not hurting anyone. It feels so good. I'm my own person. I know what I'm doing.

Faith is required in trusting God for His promises both good and bad. **As we believe by faith, we also obey by faith.**

Abandonment refers to God leaving you alone, removing His power, protection, goodness and grace from you like he did to Samson. Many presume to draw on God for his blessings and benefits without dealing with their sin, using Him as an errand boy or superpower to exalt or indulge themselves. But God will not be mocked.

God ultimately abandons unrepentant man to do whatever shameful things their hearts desire. They trade the truth about God for a lie.

They worship the created things instead of the creator.

God abandons them to their foolish thinking since they think it is foolish to acknowledge God. He lets them do things that should never be done.

Their lives become full of every kind of wickedness.

They invent new ways of sinning.

They encourage others to join them.

All the while they know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. (Paraphrase)

Romans 1:24-32

It always seems to follow the same pattern.

God sets the standard
Man assaults the standard
Then man ignores the standards
Then man rejects the standards
Then man suppresses the standards
Then man experiences the wrath of God...
God removes His restraining Grace
God lets them go on their course uninterrupted
Man experiences the logical consequences of their sinful choices



Man rejects God.

Then makes up new ideas of God.

Then rationalizes in their defense – making themselves feel wise when they have become fools.

Man's descent is complete.

They have transferred their allegiance from the One True God to powerless idols, worshipping the creation instead of the creator.



While it is true man can choose to jump off this merry-go-round at any time, repent and place themselves back under God's authority and blessing, the farther down the road of sin one has traveled, the darker the road and the duller the conscience.

No one will be able to say they didn't know, that they deserve another chance, that it's not fair.

"For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and the sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God."

Romans 1:20

Your turn:

What are some ways modern society worships the creation or man made idols instead of the Creator God?

Do you see this happening in your own life?

What kinds of things have you made into idols that push God out of His rightful place in your life?

inventory Your Time

Describe your average day.



What do you always make time to do?
What things do you never quite get around to doing?
What is your biggest waste of time?
Prioritize your current commitments.
What would you like to do if you had time?
What would you like to stop doing? What's stopping you?
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journal

8.5 Where have all the Flowers Gone?

Where did all the good go?

No community, no beauty, no hope. No significance, no purpose. No love, No God.

Only regret and suffering.....forever. That's what Hell is like.

Think about your worst day ever. Your worst pain, when you were most afraid, When you were most alone, your worst sorrow.

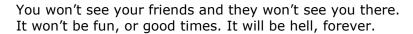
That will not even come close to what Hell is like.

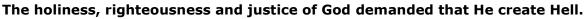


Hell is what we are saved from – eternally – because eternity in hell is the punishment for sin. Justice demands it and not all justice is accomplished in this life. (Psalm 73)

What does the Bible say about Hell?

- A place of darkness Matt.8:12, 22:13
- Outside the heavenly city Rev. 22:14-15
- Away from God's Presence Matt. 25:41
- The other direction from God 2 Thess. 1:7-9
- Horrifying in the dark forever Mark 9:43-48
- Bottomless pit Rev. 20:13
- A burning dump Mark 9:43-48
- A prison 1 Peter 3:19
- A place of anguish and regret Luke 16:28
- Self inflicted torment Luke 16:24
- Place of eternal fire not earthly fire heat, no flames, nothing burns up
- Everlasting Matt. 25:41,46, 2 Thess. 1:9, Rev. 20:10
- No way out Luke 16:26
- Judgment begins immediately after death John 8:21, Heb. 9:27
- People are conscious after death, you will know where you are 2 Cor. 5:8, Phil. 1:23, Rev. 6:9, Luke 16:23
- Evil is quarantined there because it is contagious 1 Cor. 5:6





He must enforce the moral laws of the universe or He, Himself, would be immoral. The goodness of God requires eternal separation from evil – or God is not Sovereign. (I Cor. 15:24-28, Rev. 20-22)

But having done that, **He also did everything possible to prevent us from going there.** He spared no expense. – sent His own Son to pay the price, His blood, the ultimate sacrifice. If there is no hell, there is no reason for Jesus sacrifice to deliver us from our sins.



Free choice demands a hell – it is the other choice.

We can't have it both ways. Choose carefully.

Your turn:

What are some good things God provides that we take for granted or do not notice? How has hell been glamorized or misrepresented? What impact has this had on society?

adventuring

God at the Movies

This journey your assignment is to go to the movies....or put in a DVD, or watch one on TV. You can pick any movie you want. As you watch, keep the following questions in mind.

What was your movie?

What is the main theme of the movie?

What common human struggles does it portray?

Are any of the main characters searching for something?

How are they looking for answers to these questions?

Who can I trust?

Is there anything worth living for?

Does anyone care?

How do you see God revealed in the story even if that was not the intention of the movie?

How is the story resolved? Does this movie positively or negatively point to specific attributes of God? If it was a negative portrayal, how would you counter it?



journal

8.6 | Object!

There are as many earthly objections to a God who expresses wrath and allows people to choose to go to Hell as there are to a God who would allow for the possibility of evil to exist.

- A loving God would not send billions of people to hell.
- A loving God would be more tolerant of those who disagree with Him.
- A loving God would not be so mean as to send good people to hell.
- What about people who never hear about Jesus?
- How could God be happy in Heaven knowing people are suffering in hell?
- It's not fair to send people to Hell if they are born sinners.

God created a marvelous world, and then placed mankind within it, a beautiful place where His children would explore, create, work, making choices and having their actions count.

He loved us so much He lets us choose to love Him back, because true love is not coerced. But our free choice led to the wrong choice and sin actualized the potential of evil.

Since Evil cannot go unpunished, Hell is the place where sin and evil is paid for. Having created Hell to pay for sin, God then made every possible effort to prevent any of His Children from going there. He spared no expense sending Jesus to pay the ultimate price.

Since Justice requires sin must be paid for, **Jesus says, "You can pay or I can pay for you."**"I AM the way, the truth and the light. No one comes to the Father except through me."

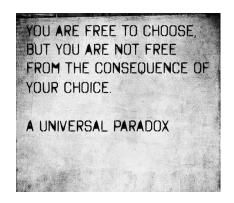
Without Hell there would be no true choice, no real and final consequences for our actions. God must enforce His moral rules of the universe or He Himself would be immoral.

The choice is simple and God will honor our choice. **He will not force us to accept His love** and forgiveness. But either way, our sins must still be paid for.

If we say we want nothing to do with God, then He honors our decision and grants us our wish – a place where He is not, away from His Presence. But when you remove God from a place, it becomes a place of torment.

People who reject Jesus in this life will not rejoice with Him in the next. Those who want nothing to do with Him now, will certainly not want to spend eternity in His Presence.

A loving God does not send anyone to Hell. Sinners send themselves.



"There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God – "THY will be done" and those to whom God says, "Thy will be done." C S Lewis.

We can choose to have a second birth or a second death. Both choices are by faith. By choosing not to choose – we still choose.

Many still ask, "Why does God need to punish people? Why not reform people instead?" God does reform people and that period is called earthly life. (2 Peter 3:9, I Tim. 2:4)

Your turn:

Explain how human or earthly objections to God's wrath and hell arise from faulty definitions of love, fairness and goodness. What is God's definition of each? How have we perverted these?

lyrics

You might wonder why lyrics are included in a study like this.

I believe lyrics, or poetry put to music, as well as the accompanying music, have always been used by the Most High to impact our hearts and minds –

either by our part in its creative process –
or through our participation in its expression –
or through our pleasure as a recipient of its sensory benefits.

mu "sic

Please try to access and listen to the musical versions on your own - *iTunes* and **youtube** are great online resources. If you are using the PDF version of this study and are connected to the internet, clicking on the song title will bring up a video of each song. The lyrics presented will not always be spiritual in their original context – but much can still be gained from applying them to how they describe and point to the Most High God.

Help!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Q ZzBGPdgE

Words and Music by John Lennon and Paul McCartney
Performed by The Beatles
© 1968, Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC
Youtube video © 2015 Calderstone Productions Limited (a division of Universal Music Group) / Subafilms Ltd

Help, I need somebody, Help, not just anybody, Help, you know I need someone, help.

When I was younger, so much younger than today,
I never needed anybody's help in any way.
But now these days are gone, I'm not so self assured,
Now I find I've changed my mind and opened up the doors.

Help me if you can, I'm feeling down And I do appreciate you being round. Help me, get my feet back on the ground, Won't you please, please help me.

And now my life has changed in oh so many ways,
My independence seems to vanish in the haze.
But every now and then I feel so insecure,
I know that I just need you like I've never done before.

Help me if you can, I'm feeling down And I do appreciate you being round. Help me, get my feet back on the ground, Won't you please, please help me.

When I was younger, so much younger than today,
I never needed anybody's help in any way.
But now these days are gone, I'm not so self assured,
Now I find I've changed my mind and opened up the doors.

Help me if you can, I'm feeling down And I do appreciate you being round. Help me, get my feet back on the ground, Won't you please, please help me, help me, help me, oh. 12 "Help!" is a song by the Beatles that served as the title song for both the 1965 film and its soundtrack album. It was also released as a single, and was number one for three weeks in both the United States and the United Kingdom. The original title to the song and the movie was "Eight Arms To Hold You."

Primarily written by John Lennon during what he has described as his "fat Elvis period" he further elaborated in a 1971 interview with *Rolling Stone*, that this was one of his favorite Beatles records, because, "I meant it - it's real." The former Beatle added: "The lyric is as good now as it was then. It is no different, and it makes me feel secure to know that I was that aware of myself then. It was just me singing 'Help' and I meant it."

The documentary series *The Beatles Anthology* revealed that Lennon wrote the lyrics of the song to express his stress after the Beatles' quick rise to success. Writer Ian MacDonald describes the song as the "first crack in the protective shell" Lennon had built around his emotions during the Beatles' rise to fame, and an important milestone in his songwriting style." Paul McCartney helped Lennon write the song, but did not realize it was actually Lennon calling for help until years later.

Along with "Yesterday", this is one of two Beatles US #1 hits with just one word in the title. While The Beatles sped up the tempo to make it more commercial, Lennon originally intended it as a slow song. In 1985, this became the first Beatles song ever used in a commercial when it was used in an ad for Ford cars. Ford paid \$100,000 for it, and the version in the commercial was performed by a sound-alike group. In 2004, "Help!" was ranked number 29 on *Rolling Stone*'s list of "The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time".

Your turn:

Describe a time in your life when you realized you needed someone to help you. Do you ever look to God for help? How can HE help you?

Eve of Destruction (Eve 2012)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HS0m-TBBOyM

Original words and music by P.F. Sloan Updated Lyrics (2012) by Barry McGuire Performed by Barry McGuire © 1965, Dunhill Records Youtube video uploaded by KeystoneMagazine

Well, the Western World is in danger

We the People have become like strangers

Taking polls and opinions while the fabric decays

For the greed of the few how much the innocent pays

And the children are watching, you can hear how they pray

And you tell me over and over and over again my friend How you don't believe we're still on the eve of destruction

Think of this green Earth, a tropical rainforest

And take a look around to the Sahara Desert

We wanna cut it down, burn it to the ground, leave barren and waste

Till there's no room for living, animals, rivers or lakes

And there's nothing to stop it but a miracle of faith

And you tell me over and over and over again my friend Said you don't believe we're still on the eve of destruction Now you don't believe we're still on the eve of destruction

I know you understand what we're trying to say Can't you see the madness that's lead up to today?

We believe its time for a change, for a new golden age

Where the business of life runs in harmony with nature

For nature reflects the beauty within ourselves

And this changin' attitude would ring out the Liberty Bells

For the hungry and the homeless and the helpless as well

And you tell me over and over and over again my friend Saying you don't believe we're still on the eve of destruction Oh you don't believe we're still on the eve of destruction

At the source of silence, we'll sings songs of creation
 Transcending the boundaries of our soul's imagination
 You can't twist the truth, it knows no regulation
 Cause the truth is in Love, Freedom and Cooperation

Let there be peace in your heart, that's all right, that's where it starts
 Let there be peace tonight, in all the Nations

For the music of life is in our laughter and liberation

And you tell me over and over again my friend Saying you don't believe we're still on the eve of destruction No, no, no, you don't believe we're on the eve of destruction 13

The original version of "Eve of Destruction" was written by P. F. Sloan in 1965. Several artists have recorded it, but the best-known recording was by Barry McGuire. A protest song about political issues of the '60s, this was banned from many radio stations for its antigovernment lyrics, but still managed to hit #1 in the US. The song takes on racism, hypocrisy and injustice. The Kennedy assassination was an influence on the song.

PF Sloan, who was 19 when he wrote the song, wrote on his website: "The song 'Eve of Destruction' was written in the early morning hours between midnight and dawn in mid-1964. The most outstanding experience I had in writing this song was hearing an inner voice inside of myself for only the second time. It seemed to have information no one else could've had. For example, I was writing down this line in pencil 'think of all the hate there is in Red Russia.' This inner voice said 'No, no it's Red China!' I began to argue and wrestle with that until near exhaustion. I thought Red Russia was the most outstanding enemy to freedom in the world, but this inner voice said the Soviet Union will fall before the end of the century and Red China will endure in crimes against humanity well into the new century! This inner voice that is inside of each and every one of us but is drowned out by the roar of our minds! The song contained a number of issues that were unbearable for me at the time. I wrote it as a prayer to God for an answer.

I have felt it was a love song and written as a prayer because, to cure an ill you need to know what is sick. In my youthful zeal I hadn't realized that this would be taken as an attack on The System! Examples: The media headlined the song as everything that is wrong with the youth culture. First, show the song is just a hack song to make money and therefore no reason to deal with its questions. Prove the 19-year old writer is a communist dupe. Attack the singer as a parrot for the writers word. The media claimed that the song would frighten little children. I had hoped thru this song to open a dialogue with Congress and the people. The media banned me from all national television shows. Oddly enough they didn't ban Barry. The United States felt under threat. So any positive press on me or Barry was considered un-patriotic. A great deal of madness, as I remember it! I told the press it was a love song. A love song to and for humanity, that's all. It ruined Barry's career as an artist and in a year I would be driven out of the music business too."

"Barry McGuire didn't like the song 'Eve of Destruction' that much so when McGuire's record is released 'Eve' is the B-side. Somewhere in the Great Midwest of America a DJ played the wrong side by mistake! So as you can see, when people had written that this song was some calculated idea on how to capitalize on the emerging folk scene, it's simply B.S. Honest to God that's what happened and how the song got played."

In this updated recording, Barry McGuire integrates new political and world issues within the context of the old song. His message is still relevant and as a dart in the heart whether we think of war, environmental issues, politics, power, brokenness and any other subject that is threatening our existence on the face of this earth!

Your turn:

What are some key issues that appear to be causing societies to move toward destruction? Do you believe we can save ourselves from destruction? What kinds of feelings or frustrations do these issues raise in your soul? Does this draw you to God or make you run from Him?

God's Not Dead

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S OTz-lpDjw

Words and Music by Daniel Bashta
Performed by The Newsboys
© 2011, Inpop Records, EMI Christian Music Group
Youtube video uploaded by NewsboysVEVO

Let love explode and bring the dead to life.

A love song bold to see a revolution

Some how

Let love explode and bring the dead to life.

A love song bold to bring a revolution

Some how

Now I'm lost in your freedom And this world I'll overcome

My God's not dead he's surely alive
He's living on the inside roaring like a lion
Our God's not dead he's surely alive
He's living on the inside roaring like a lion
He's roaring he's roaring he's roaring like a lion

Let hope arise and make the darkness hide
When faith is dead I need a resurrection
Some how
Now I'm lost in your freedom
And this world I'll overcome

My God's not dead he is surely alive He is living on the inside roaring like a lion Our God's not dead he is surely alive He's living on the inside roaring like a lion

He's roaring he is roaring he's roaring like a lion He's roaring he is roaring he's roaring like a lion

Let heaven roar and fire fall Come shake the ground with the sound of revival

Let heaven roar and fire fall Come shake the ground with the sound of revival

Let heaven roar and fire fall
Come shake the ground with the sound of revival

My God's not dead he's surely alive
He's living on the inside roaring like a lion
My God's not dead he's surely alive
He's living on the inside roaring like a lion
Our God's not dead he's surly alive
He's roaring he's roaring like a lion
Our God's not dead he's surly alive
He's roaring he's roaring like a lion
He's roaring like a lion

Impassioned to wake this generation with his 2011 debut, "The Sounds of Daniel Bashta", which sparked the worship anthem "God's Not Dead (Like A Lion)" that was also recorded by Newsboys, David Crowder Band and others, Daniel Bashta writes songs during a season of hope and healing in his family's life and in his new role: fatherhood. Song after song, he gives voice to the faith of a generation willing to open the door for the miraculous, redemptive work of God to infiltrate everything.

From www.danielbashta.com:

Married five years, Daniel and his wife, Taylor, like millions of young couples, had experienced infertility and were checking into their medical and adoption options. Creating their family profile and turning it in to Bethany Christian Services, within a few weeks they received a call from a birth mother that had chosen the Bashtas to be her baby's family.

Months later, in the hospital on the day of their son, Phoenix's birth, the Bashtas would begin to get a glimpse of the care with which God had been writing their story. "We were sitting there with the birth mother, and my sisters brought in a little stuffed lion. I told Phoenix's birth mom, 'We don't do teddy bears in our family, we do lions.' And then she told us a part of her story we had not heard. She'd been given an ultimatum: either have an abortion or get out of the house. So she moved to Atlanta, heard about Bethany Christian Agency on MTV and had the courage to walk in and check it out.

Around that same time, a friend took her to a church called Passion City, she said, and some guy on stage (Chris Tomlin) started singing some song about a lion and a roar. She remembered it clearly because during that song, she felt a presence come over her. 'I never knew you could feel God, like I felt God in that moment,' she said. She sat down and started journaling the lyrics to the song, 'Like A Lion.'

"We all started crying in the hospital room," Daniel says. "I looked at her and said well actually I wrote that song. Then she jumped up and started crying and saying what an impact the words and presence of this song had on her 'To know that my son has such a calling in this life, even before he was born and that his dad's song was being sung over him before he even knew who his father was...' I thought I knew what God was capable of, but we experienced His faithfulness in such a miraculous way."

And that miracle led straight to another. Within a few months, the Bashtas were pregnant, later giving birth to a daughter, Bravery Annette.

Your turn:

Are there any areas of your life where your hope or faith has died and needs a resurrection? What causes you to think God is dead? List some ways God roars like a lion.

more cool stuff

Life after Life



What happens when we die?

Is this life all there is?

Is there more?

In our age of relativity, tolerance, and multiculturalism, an explosion of views has appeared on the scene regarding life after death. The various belief systems, worldviews and religions, new and old, all present their ideas in the public square. And we are more confused than ever. It seems, as they say, everything old has become new again.

After Death - Then What?

Most of these beliefs and ideas all fall into the major categories presented below.

Naturalism/Atheism/Darwinism/Secular Humanism: This is the belief that we are just a physical body made up of physical matter. When we die our bodies decompose and return to the earth. Man has no soul or spirit or afterlife. It's over. Some types believe that their legacy will live on, but only if they live a good life.

Animistic/Tribal Worldviews: At death, one travels to meet other departed family members in an underworld or realm of shadows. They may need to take food, water and supplies with them for the journey. This is provided for them at some kind of ceremonial send off. Some believe they will also need a guide, from this life or the next to help them find their way.

Eastern/New Age/Neo-Paganism, Neo-Pantheism: There are many flavors of these worldviews. The most common element in all of them is the belief in reincarnation, where one's soul is trapped in a cycle of rebirth to work off the karmic debts of past lives.

One version believes the ultimate destination of this process is reaching nirvana, the highest spiritual attainment. When nirvana is reached the soul is extinguished and becomes one with the cosmos, or is absorbed back into Nothingness – the ultimate escape.



Another version believes that life is a cycle of continuous birth, death and rebirth. Souls rest up between periods of reincarnation in various heavenly like destinations with fun, food and frolic. Reincarnation becomes a tool for continual growth and learning.

Others believe we just move on to the next dimension, a more glorified version of our earthly existence.

Monotheism: These worldviews believe in One God with a judgment of works that occurs after death or at the end of history. The outcome of this judgment determines whether one spends eternity in heaven or hell. Some of the different beliefs on how one gains access to heaven are listed below.

- There are only levels of heaven and no hell
- Only a certain number are granted entrance into heaven
- There is no way to know if you will go to heaven or hell up to arbitrary God.
- You just need more good deeds than bad and you are in.
- You need to do specific works to qualify
- Universalists believe everyone will go to heaven no matter what, there are just different pathways
- Some believe there is a place between death and heaven where people can work off their bad deeds before being granted access to heaven



Post Modernism: This is the worldview of no absolutes. Everything is true and nothing is true. Nothing is definite, unless you believe its true and then it's true for you. Your truth is not my truth and that's ok. Decisions are feelings based. All roads lead to heaven. Whatever you believe about life after death is true for you.

Can they all be true?
Where did they all come from?
Who ultimately decides?

At this point we need to set the stage.

There is a Spirit World

God is Spirit (John 4:24), and the Spirit world existed prior to the Creation of the physical universe, earth and mankind. Man is made up of body, soul and spirit. Angels and fallen angels or demons are part of the heavenly or spiritual realm.

The devil or Satan/Lucifer and the demons are fallen angels, powerful spirits under the judgment of God. They are currently roaming the earth. (1 Peter 5:8) The devil currently spends his time on earth and in Heaven. He is the Prince of this World. (Eph.2:2, John 12:31) It is under His control for now, but only because God has allowed it. God is still sovereign. The devil knows the Truth about God and Jesus, as do the rest of the demons. They know how the story ends. Satan will not be in charge of hell, handing out punishment. His punishment will be the worst of all. (James 2:19, Rev. 12:12)

Because the devil and his demons are doomed, they want to take as many humans as possible to hell with them. So they appear as helpful spirits, or spirits of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) The Devil is also the Father of Lies (John 8:44) but knew that one single lie wouldn't be able to deceive all mankind, so he created several which have developed into the worldviews listed above.

As "god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4), Satan is the major influence on the ideals, opinions, goals, hopes and views of the majority of people. The thoughts, ideas, speculations and false religions of the world are under his control and have sprung from his lies and deceptions. He would rather we believe he doesn't exist. He promotes our individualism, our pride and ego, our demand for power and control. He promotes anything that distracts us from the Truth of God. He seeks to lead the world astray. (Rev.12:9)

We are warned to "Test the Spirits" in order to discover the truth. (1 John 4:1) This is especially important regarding ghosts, the occult, fortune telling, psychic phenomena and most Near Death Experiences, all which are lies to distract from the Truth of God.

Truth and Reality

If you have been with us on this journey from the beginning you already have discovered the revealed Truth and Reality about

- The One and Only Most High God.
- His Word the Bible.
- Our Human Condition, sinful, separated from God by our own Free Will, yet made in His Image
- Jesus, the God Man, who came to earth as the solution to our sin problem.
- Jesus' Death, His willing sacrifice on the cross, and His Resurrection, paying the price required for all sinners, for all time.

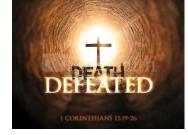
Which brings us up to date – as we now confront the Truth and Reality regarding the consequences our choices in this life make on our future, as we stand at the crossroads of eternity, with Hell on one side and Heaven on the other.

When Adam sinned, sin entered the world.

"Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.......Still, everyone died....For the sin of this one Man, Adam, brought death to many." Romans 5:12

Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection defeated death. Death is the natural end of earthly life. But it is not the end of eternal life. Where we spend eternal life depends on the choices we make during our earthly life. (Daniel 12:2-3, Matthew 25:46, John 5:28, Rev. 20:14-15, Hebrews 9:27, John 3:16-31, 35-36)

Death results from sin and sinners will be punished in eternity unless they choose to accept the gift of life paid for by Jesus. (Matthew 13:41,50, Rev. 20:11-15, 21:8)



Heaven or Hell – both are very real and real people go there. Both are why Jesus died.

Why Hell?

The reality of hell is obviously not a popular idea. **Even God hates hell**, since He takes no pleasure in punishing the wicked. It is burdensome to believe and difficult to defend, very often becoming the first tenet of faith to be abandoned.

Because of Hell, God appears from our perspective to be unloving, cruel, vindictive and barbarous. Hell is judged to be one big divine overreaction, cosmic overkill, and certainly proof of intolerance and lack of civility on God's part.

We say it's unfair to punish people for eternity for little finite sins of no consequence. But here we go, once again, judging the infinite, transcendent God from our sinful, worldly perspective. From our sentimental, culturally defined mindsets drenched in ideas of freedom and love, we dare to shake our fists at the God who created the universe and holds us in the palm of his Hands. We dare take the moral high ground.

God did not create evil, but because He gave mankind freedom to choose between right and wrong, the possibility for it had to exist. God originally created Hell for Satan and his demons. (Matthew 25:41, Rev. 20:10) but since man rebelled, it also punishes human evil and sin. Jesus stated the Greatest Commandment is to Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and spirit. (Mark 12:28-34) Breaking this ultimate law leads to the ultimate sanction.

We have no excuse. God has already provided us with all the information we need to choose to love Him and avoid Hell.

- Revelations through nature
- Moral Code
- Bible
- Crucified and Risen Son Jesus
- Holy Spirit
- Church, other Christians
- Personal testimony and witness

Clearly, **God made every possible effort to prevent** any of his children from eternity in Hell. He spared no expense, including giving the life of His innocent Son to pay price for the sins of the world. (John 3:16-17, 2 Cor. 5:14-15, 1 Tim. 2:6, 4:10, Titus 2:11, 2 Peter 3:9)

It all comes down to this - We choose who pays - Us or Jesus.

God loves us so much that He lets us choose to Love Him in return. Love is not coerced. If we say we want nothing to do with Him, **He gives us our choice**. Free choice must be kept absolutely free. Man chooses and God honors our choice – He will not override it. Without hell – there is no true choice, no consequences for wrong actions. Hell was created because God is just and loving, it is His loving response to those who say, "I want nothing to do with You."

People who reject God are allowed to live without Him forever. (Rev. 14:11)

Hell is the logical natural consequence for refusing God. Those in hell have no one to blame but themselves. God did not send them there. They chose the Highway to Hell over the Stairway to Heaven.

Who is in Hell?

Real people are in hell, right now. They are people who chose to be there by refusing God's offer of salvation. They defied their maker and chose instead to be the center of their universe.

They wanted nothing to do with God, so their sins are not forgiven. Since they chose to live without God in their earthly life, they will get to live without Him in eternity.

They chose freedom over salvation.

They believed Satan's lie that there are no consequences to disobedience to God. They are truly lost souls – rejecting everything that is not simply of or about themselves.



They chose to live without God

Rejecting His revelation
Suppressing the truth
Using their power to say no
Rejecting the Spirit
Rejecting Jesus, the crucified Son

Eventually the Devil and all his demons will also be in hell after Christ returns. The Devil is not in charge of hell. He will not be punishing the wicked, but will also be eternally punished.

What is Hell like? - What happens there?

Trying to describe hell is like trying to describe the indescribable. No one has ever broken out to return and give a report. Jesus said much about hell and eternal punishment and it is recorded in the gospels. Below is a summary list of some descriptions and truths about Hell:

Hell is the absence of all Good and God. When you remove God, His creation, beauty, goodness, and love from a place – it becomes hell.

- No love, purpose, hope, beauty, community, significance
- Essence is relational, separation from God
- Not Heaven's equal opposite compared to heaven, hell is a speck of dust.
- Hell not part of original creation
- Exclusion from anything that matters

Abyss outside in the Darkness

- No hope for escape
- Outside of time
- Solitary confinement, separated from friends and loved ones, from anyone
- Unbearable spiritual, emotional and physical pain and torment (Rev. 14:10)
- Place of anguish and regret, shame, contempt
- Self inflicted torment will know it is your own fault
- Weeping and gnashing of teeth blaming self forever (Matthew 13:50)
- Quarantine for evil people
- Imperishable physical bodies in unquenchable eternal fire (Mark 9:48)
- Continuity from earthly lives memories will be with them
- Long for relief
- Cannot be comforted
- Agonizingly dull, small, insignificant

Not fun, you won't see your friends there

Not a torture chamber – no one will be torturing you

Worst possible nightmare

No one will care if you're there or feel bad for you

Alone, Outside in the dark, Forever We should fear hell Very, very Real **Avoidable**

Understanding God's Provision for us to Avoid Hell

Apart from Jesus – We all go to Hell.

Jesus paid the price for the sins of all manks

Jesus paid the price for the sins of all mankind in all time.

He experienced that horrible separation from God while on the cross which is the same thing that happens to everyone in hell. Only He experienced it at the magnitude of separation equal to all men in all time.

As the only possible person able to pay this price on our behalf, He willingly did this deed as a man, an innocent, pure, and sinless man. He died as a man, was buried, and on the third day was raised to life as a man.

Jesus is the Way, The Truth and the Life – the only way to God. (John 14:6) **Jesus is the Door** - not a door, but the only door to salvation, to Heaven. (John 10:9)

He offers the free gift of forgiveness to those who believe. Our sins are wiped away and we go to heaven instead of hell.

He is the only one who can speak from personal experience about eternity, hell, heaven and death.

He is the only expert.

What about people who lived in the Old Testament?

Old Testament (OT) salvation was based on **believing in the Promise of the Christ to come**. They had faith in the Messiah Jesus before he was born. (Romans 3:23-26, Heb.11, Is. 53.5, Zech.9:9, Job 19:25-26, Gen. 3:15, Gen. 22: 8)

God forgave sins in the OT based on Christ's future atonement. They received **salvation on credit**. (Heb. 9,10)

At death, the spirits and souls of OT saints or believers went to a place called **Paradise** and their bodies returned to dust. Even Jesus, at his death, entrusted His Spirit back into the Father's hands. (Luke 23:46, Gen. 3:19, Job 34:14-15, Luke 16:19-31, 23:43, Ps. 16:11, 23:6, Job 19:25-27, Matt. 22:23-32)

There is debate over whether Paradise/Heaven was part of **Hades/Sheol** under the earth or another term for the Heaven above with God. Those who believe in a transitional Heaven and Hell, believe Paradise was under the earth as part of Hades, which is a holding zone for both the saved and unsaved, prior to Jesus' resurrection.

The side for those bound for hell, both human and fallen angels, is called **Torments**, and it was separated by a great chasm from Paradise. Many believe this was the illustrated in the **Parable** of Lazarus and the Rich Man in Luke 16:19-31. The reason these OT saints were not allowed

in the presence of God was because the actual atonement for their sins would not be accomplished until the resurrection of Jesus. **Their sins were covered up but they were not taken away.** Only Jesus could do that.

Many believe that during the three days between Jesus death and resurrection, He went down to Paradise. He had promised the repentant thief on the cross, that on that very day, based on his belief in Jesus, he would be with Jesus in Paradise. (Luke 23:43)

Matthew 27:50-53 tells us that many of the saints came out of their graves after Jesus' resurrection and walked around in the city, freed from their confinement in Paradise and now ready to go with Him to Heaven and the Presence of God.



The reason for this is that at his death and resurrection, Jesus took the keys of death and hell (Revelation 1:18), with the immediate effect being that the gates of hell (Sheol or hades) could no longer keep back his followers (Matthew 16:18). Death no longer could contain them. They accompanied Jesus when He ascended to Heaven. **Paradise is now in Heaven above**.

What happens now when we die?

"Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment." Heb. 9:27



Everyone who dies today, immediately faces the judgment of faith. The souls and spirits of those who believe in Jesus Christ, whose sins have been paid for by His Sacrifice on the Cross, go immediately to Heaven, to be with Him. (2 Cor. 5:8, Phil.1:23, Rev.2:7)

We will not become angels, or float on clouds with harps. We will not be asleep. We will be conscious existing as soul and spirit complete with all our memories and knowledge.

This present Heaven is in the angelic realm. We will wait here with Christ for the following things to occur.

- Christ's return to earth (I Thess. 4:13-18)
- Receiving our glorified resurrected bodies (1 Thess. 4:13-18)
- The Final Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15)
- Creation of the New Heavens and the New Earth (Isaiah 65:17)

God will then dwell with us on the New Earth, a place made especially for us. This New Earth will actually be a Future Heaven on Earth. (Rev. 21-22) Access to the Paradise banned in Genesis 3 will be reacquired.

We should not assume we are headed for Heaven. It is not our default destination. Our names are not automatically written in the Book of Life. (Rev. 21:27)

The souls and spirits of **those who have rejected Christ's payment for their sins** today, will go to the **same place the wicked have always gone – The Torments** section of Hades or the Present Hell.

They will remain there until they are resurrected with imperishable physical bodies for the Great White Throne Judgment portrayed of Rev. 20:11-15. After this, they and all of Hades will be thrown into the Lake of Fire, or the Final Eternal Hell. This was the hell most often referred to by Jesus, when he used the term Gehenna, or burning dump. There they will be fully conscious and physically aware. They will not be consumed or annihilated.

Objections to the Doctrine of Hell

Many objections have been raised throughout the ages against the reality of Hell. Most fall into the following major categories.

Is it fair to send people to hell if they are born sinners?

- There are plenty of turnouts and off ramps on the Road to Hell.
- The way off the road to hell is through repentance (Luke 13:3, Acts 17:30, 2 Peter 3:9)
- Everyone is given so many chances, there is no excuse (Romans 1:19-20, 2:12-15)
- He will send the message of Salvation to all who seek it (Matthew 7:7, Luke 19:10, Hebrews 11:6)

If God is love, how can He send people to Hell?

- God provided a way of escape (Romans 2:4, 3:22-24, 4:7-8, 5:8-9)
- He will not coerce love or force their love or obedience
- True love is persuasive which is why He gave us Free Will
- We choose to send ourselves to Hell (Romans 1:18-25)

How could God be happy in heaven, knowing people are suffering in hell?

- The same way we can be happy eating, knowing people around the world are starving, if in fact they are refusing to eat food what has been offered them.
- In heaven we will love what God loves, and hate what God hates.
- Hell does not make God miserable. In fact, hell satisfies God's justice and glorifies it by showing what a great and fearful standard it is.

Misunderstanding the Character of God

- Since God is infinitely powerful He could stop evil.
- Since God is infinitely good He should stop evil.
- Yet God went to Hell on our Behalf than rather live in Heaven without us.
- He is allowing time for as many to respond to his love, so none will perish without it.
- We blame it all on God and become His judge.
- His love restrains His Wrath and Justice.

Man's rebellion against God's law

- We define a loving person as one who will condone our sin.
- God's definition of love is to forgive our sin if we repent.
- We exalt ourselves instead of God.
- We seek to be like God, be in charge of ourselves.
- We do not want anything to do with God.
- God, in love, grants us our wish.
- God doesn't need to torture us, He simply leaves us alone.



Heaven

Unfortunately, there seems to be just as much confusion about Heaven as there is about Hell. **Heaven is not so much a place as it is a dimension** – outside of our time and space continuum.

God created the heavens and the earth that we experience while He existed in Heaven.

There is more out there than we can see or imagine, worlds to explore and discover.

- In Heaven all things will be made clear. (1 Cor. 13:12)
- We will regain the relational harmony with God that was lost in the Garden of Eden.
- There will be no more pain and suffering or tears.
- There will be no more darkness or evil.
- Nature and Spirit will be full harmonized.
- Our glorified bodies, souls, and spirit will be fully harmonized otherwise we will be the same person.
- We will know what it means to be fully and completely human, fulfilled in our work.
- We will worship God in person.
- We will serve from our giftedness the same gifts and talents He gave us in our earthly life.
- There are things too wonderful to speak of.
- Earth is but a reflection of Heaven Heaven is the source material It will be amazing.

There are two phases of Heaven: Heaven prior to Christ's Return and the Final Judgment and then the eternal Heaven that is the New Heavens and the New Earth of Rev. 21-22. We will be resurrected with our glorified bodies when Christ returns prior to the Final Judgment.

Some good books on Heaven:

<u>Heaven</u> by Randy Alcorn
<u>Afterlife</u> by Hank Hanegraaff
<u>One Second After you Die</u> By Erwin W. Lutzer
<u>The Great Divorce</u> by C.S. Lewis
<u>Imagine Heaven</u> by John Burke

How do we know?

Jesus spent more time talking about hell than He did about heaven.

- **Sermon on the Mount:** He explicitly warned His followers more than a half-dozen times about the dangers that lead to hell. (Matthew 5-7)
- **Olivet Discourse:** He repeatedly told His followers of the judgment to come. (Matthew 24-25)
- Rich Man and Lazarus: He graphically portrayed the finality of eternal torment in hell. (Luke 16)

Free Will and Choice Demand It: Without hell, there is no choice. The alternative to hell would be worse than hell itself, in that humans made in the image of God would be stripped of freedom and forced to worship God against their will.

Justice and Common Sense Demand It: Without hell, the wrongs of Hitler's Holocaust or any one else's great evil would never be righted. Justice would be impugned if there were no eternal consequences. Sin is sin. There are consequences.

Love Demands It: How do we know God is love? How do we know anything about love? Not by observation in nature, or through philosophical reasoning, not by science or conscience, not from history. We know about love from the revealed character of God and Jesus in the Bible.

If there is No hell – no reason for love, sacrifice, no need to save, no morality, no free will.

Then anything goes, evil becomes a matter of opinion, pragmatism reigns, life's choices make no difference, and Jesus' death was unnecessary. He is a liar and there is no rescue.

However - anything does not go. The rescue is complete and our choices matter.

"Those who choose not to love God, should not be allowed to love Him. Those who do not wish to be with Him, will be granted their wish and be separated from him. That is hell. Only then will they realize how much goodness God provided in the world." C.S.Lewis

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." John 3:36 NIV

"It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Hebrews 10:31 NIV

Your turn:

1.	List some of the reasons you or others fear death.	
2.	What do you think will happen when you die? What is the basis for your belief?	
3.	What are some of the roadblocks people run up against when they deal with the truth about heaven and hell?	
4.	How does the devil influence cultural and individual opinions and beliefs about heaven and hell?	
5.	Why does hell exist?	
6.	What does hell have to do with free will?	
7.	How does our understanding of the true nature of God help us understand the truth about heaven and hell?	
8.	What new thing did you learn about hell? About heaven?	
journal		

8.7 Nitty Gritty

- **1. Jesus saved us from the righteous wrath of God** His Holiness Justly responding to our sin.
- 2. He saved us from eternity in Hell. He saved us for eternity in Heaven.
- **3.** Anger and hatred are both elements of the wrath of God perfectly and righteously directed against sin and evil.
- **4. His Wrath is His Just response to sin**, evil and disobedience. His Wrath is His Holiness stirred into activity against sin.
- 5. Sowing and Reaping refers to the concept of reaping what you sow......logical consequences or the results of your behavior that come back to impact your life and those of your friends and family.
- **6. Abandonment refers to God leaving you alone**, removing His power, protection, goodness and grace from you.
- 7. No one will be able to say they didn't know, that they deserve another chance, that it's not fair.
- **8.** The holiness, righteousness and justice of God demanded that He create Hell. He must enforce the moral laws of the universe or He, Himself, would be immoral. The goodness of God requires eternal separation from evil or God is not Sovereign.
- **9.** Having created Hell to pay for sin, God then made every possible effort to prevent any of His Children from going there. He spared no expense, sending Jesus to pay the ultimate price.
- **10.** People who reject Jesus in this life will not rejoice with Him in the next. Those who want nothing to do with Him now, will certainly not want to spend eternity in His Presence.
- **11. Extra Credit and Reading Recommendation:** The Great Divorce by C.S. Lewis and <u>Heaven</u> by Randy Alcorn.

Authors note: This Journey is a very serious one with eternal impact for all. It is only part of the complete Journey, though, so I would encourage you not to stop here. There is very good news to come. In the next Journey, we explore the Grace and Mercy of God – the amazing antidote to His Wrath and Justice. Please carry on!

closure

Because it matters what we think about God

We have come to the end of **Hot, Hot, Hot,** the eighth of the 12 Omniallinfinitude[™] Journeys. This journey has caused us to **Remember** "Rise up, O Judge of the earth; pay back to the proud what they deserve. How long will the wicked, O Lord, how long will the wicked be jubilant?" and **Read** Romans 3, 8, and 12.

We **Analyzed** by searching out the Core Concepts of two Chapters; **Investigated** God's Wrath; and **Practiced** Secrecy. We took **Inventory** of our Time and went **Adventuring** by looking for God in the Movies. We were challenged in **More Cool Stuff** to look at our *Life after Life* either with God in Heaven or without Him in Hell. And finally, **Lyrics** spoke to our hearts and souls as we pondered through music the impact of God's Wrath on our lives.

The **Journal** revealed the bad news....as we discovered **just what Jesus saved us from**, the righteous **wrath of God** – His Holiness Justly responding to our sin. He **saved us from eternity in Hell** and **for eternity in Heaven**. We realized **we don't like to think about the wrath of an angry God** at all. God seems out of control, overly emotional, with wounded pride and a bad temper. We compare our unrighteous anger with His righteous anger and condemn Him while excusing our actions.

The truth is that **anger and hatred are both elements of the wrath of God** and both perfectly and righteously directed against sin and evil. Yet His wrath is judicial as all who experience it – deserve it. God is just and there are no special deals. No one gets off the hook. The **wrath of God is a fact and not a defect in the character of God**. To fully appreciate the Good News of Jesus, you have to first understand the Bad News of Sin and Death.

We learned that we all may experience two more subtle forms of His wrath in our everyday lives: **Sowing and Reaping** and **Abandonment**. Often we are oblivious to the **consequences of sin because most don't materialize until even years later**. We do not feel the immediate burn of touching the hot stove. Unlike Pinocchio, our noses do not grow when we sin for all to see. Our consciences may bother us for a while, but time and practice will dull any desire to repent. We **rationalize and excuse** ourselves.

Abandonment refers to **God leaving you alone, removing His ower, protection, goodness and grace** from you. Many presume to **draw on God for his blessings and benefits without dealing with their sin**, using Him as an errand boy or superpower to exalt or indulge themselves. But God will not be mocked.

Hell is what we are saved from – eternally – because eternity in hell is the punishment for sin. Justice demands it and not all justice is accomplished in this life. The holiness, righteousness and justice of God demanded that He create Hell. **He must enforce the moral laws** of the universe **or He, Himself, would be immoral**. But having done that, **He also did everything possible to prevent us from going there**.

Free choice demands a hell – it is the other choice. Since Justice requires sin must be paid for, **Jesus says**, "**You can pay or I can pay for you.**" The choice is simple and God will honor our choice. **He will not force us to accept His love** and forgiveness. But either way, our sins must still be paid for. **If we say we want nothing to do with God, then He honors our decision and grants us our wish** – a place where He is not, away from His Presence. But when you remove God from a place, it becomes a place of torment.

Now it's time to **think back** over this part of your journey and **reflect** on what you have discovered and learned. The sections below may help jog your memory. **Describe** the details of any areas that **apply** to you.

New Things I Learned

Old Things I was reminded of



Questions I have

Areas I was challenged in

First steps I took



Areas I would like to study more

"AHA!" moments

Dreams and visions



appendix

About the Journeys
About Remembering
About the Practices

about the journeys...

Welcome to **Omniallinfinitude**™.. a series of guided journeys leading to greater knowledge and understanding of the attributes of God and the Spiritual Practices necessary to gain this knowledge.

The only requirement is a willingness to learn and discover through a variety of activities. Some elements you may naturally be drawn to, some will challenge you, and some may be way out of the box for you. It is important to do them all, in order, completing one journey before moving on to the next.

There are twelve journeys or units, **each designed to be completed in two months** - either by yourself, with a friend or in a small group setting. It is important to remember we all start from different places, we start with what we know and move on from there, but we are all traveling together.

journey elements

The following elements make up each journey and should be completed in order. Some of the elements require some advance planning, so you might want to review the entire contents of each journey before you begin. Use the Table of Contents to check off your progress.

Remember: One or more Bible verses to memorize for each journey unit.

Read: Throughout the twelve journey units you will read some of the most profound and well loved chapters in the Bible.

Analyze: A variety of Bible Study methods will be offered to help you analyze in greater depth a section of the Reading above. The goal of this section is to familiarize you with various ways to greater understand God's Word.

Investigate and 10 things: Each journey unit focuses on a group of God's attributes, defining terms, and completing a directed investigation page.

Practice and Why?: Part of growing in our relationship with God is the intentional practice of skills that have helped Christians from the beginning. Each journey unit will focus on one or more of these with instructions for developing each discipline skill. Some Practices involve doing a specific activity, while others require we stop doing certain things.

Inventory: A personal inventory will be completed regarding areas related to the attributes and skills studied in each unit, reviewing your personal history and evaluating your current practices and beliefs.

Adventuring: This section guides you to venture out into the world with a specific assignment to observe, interact with or impact your surroundings and neighborhoods. The intent is to allow God to reveal Himself through nature, media and other people.

Lyrics: You are encouraged to read the included song lyrics as poetry for your inspiration, go online and listen to the actual recordings and then reflect on the questions that follow.

Journal and More Cool Stuff: The author has included some musings and further information pertaining to the subject of each journey unit for your consideration, personal response and reflection.

Closure: At the conclusion of each journey there is a place to recap where you've been, what you learned, new thoughts, challenges, growing pains.....

enjoy the adventure ...

about remembering...



Think of this exercise as a necessary foundation for future excellence – like practicing scales on the piano or doing wind sprints or swimming laps, taking your vitamins, or eating your vegetables.

We actually recall or remember all kinds of things we've memorized without really even trying. Can you think of any?

How about your phone number, email address, street address, zip code, social security number, birthday, names of your family, how to get to work, how to drive a car, that secret recipe....or how to spell or multiply, song lyrics, movie scenes, jokes, what someone was wearing, what car they drove, sports statistics, what chocolate tastes like, what the ocean smells like, and on and on.

Why do we remember what we remember?

Recollection is just the tip of the memory iceberg. Within our marvelous and mysterious brain the memory works in collaboration with us and the world – it uses all our senses and emotions. We associate smells, colors, places, rituals, symbols, landmarks, even people, with memories and when we sense the trigger, we remember.

There are tremendous spiritual benefits from Remembering Bible verses:

- Strengthens our faith
- Shapes how we view the world
- Makes God's Word immediately accessible
- Guards our minds......and that's just for starters.

Experts say that we will forget more in the first hour after our memory event than in one day, and more in the first day than the first month...What we remember for one month, will probably stay with us.....so the idea is to remember regularly for one month and we've got it.

Here are some suggestions to help you get started. We all learn differently – so don't be afraid to try some of the more unusual methods. Not only do we need to remember the verse, **we need to remember to work on remembering the verse**.

- Write the verse on several post it notes or index cards and put them where you will see them such
 as the car, the bathroom mirror, the kitchen sink, a bulletin board, your computer screen saver,
 your cell phone, by your bed.....
- Make plans to spend five minutes, twice a day (usually as you get up and before bed) to review.
- Say it slowly, 15 times in a row, emphasizing each word.
- If you have already learned it in another translation, review that one. Once you know it in one, look it up in a couple of other translations to see what is different.
- Review it when you are waiting in line, or on hold on the phone.
- Sing it make up a tune to go with it
- For extra credit, add the verse before and the verse after.

about the practices...

The Spiritual Practices put us in a place where we are better able to interact with our environment and God. God can then reach inside our spirits and transform them.

Just as our body needs to eat, breathe, exercise, drink, sleep, etc., so our spiritual self needs to make sure it is being sustained, cared for, and trained.

The results include spiritual growth, a life controlled by the Holy Spirit, evidence of the fruit of the spirit, and the ultimate goal, living life like Jesus did.

The Spiritual Practices are not:

- Meritorious laws that earn favor with God
- A way to show how spiritually mature we are
- Unpleasant or difficult

Instead, they are:

- Intentional
- Activities we do that when practiced allow us to do activities we cannot now do.
- Adaptable to work with our temperaments and gifts
- Adjustable according to the rhythm and seasons of our lives

There are two kinds

Practices of Abstinence - when we stop doing something that is perfectly normal to allow ourselves to focus more on God, His Word, and growing in godliness. These also help us resist our tendency toward sins of commission (when we do something we shouldn't do). We withdraw to breathe in all that God can provide to us, breaking the hold that the world has on our lives. Practices of Abstinence help ready us and create room for the Practices of Engagement.

Practices of Engagement – when we do certain activities that help us grow in Christ and obey his commandments. The Practices of Abstinence have opened up the time and broken up the preoccupations so we are now free to learn of, focus on, and practice those things that God commands us to do. These assist in keeping us from our tendency toward sins of omission (not doing the things we should do). We engage to breathe out all that God commands us. ¹¹

As their name implies, the Spiritual Practices are not one-time events, but skills to be learned and developed over time. So don't be discouraged in the beginning if you struggle with them or find them difficult. Make them a regular part of your life. In our Journeys we would rather **emphasize the actual practicing of the Practices** and not so much the reading about them.....and let you discover the benefits as they appear in your life.

credits

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- 5. A. W. Tozer, <u>The Knowledge of the Holy</u>, San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1961, page 113. This is one of the classic concise explanations of the attributes of God. A must read for those who want to grow in their knowledge of God.
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so what now?

Continue your Omniallinfinitude™ adventure with

☐ Journey Nine: O Mercy Me

☐ Journey Ten: To Die For

☐ Journey Eleven: Up Close & Personal

☐ Journey Twelve: Perfect Ending