

**“How Do I See Myself Honestly?” (Growth in Grace I)**  
**(Study 3 of “Getting Personal with God: Sonship A” Series)**

**Opening Questions (10 Minutes)**

1. Where in your life do you feel most like an imposter or hypocrite? (Give an example.)
  - When do you most feel the tension between your public-put-together self and your private-more-messy self?
2. How do you handle feeling like a fake in that space?
  - Or how do you handle when you’re (almost) exposed or found-out?

Let’s look at how the Bible names that feeling and what Paul does (& doesn’t) do about it

**Scripture Study (10-15 Minutes)**

Read Romans Chapters 7 and 8, verses 15-25 and 1-2 (first in the ESV, then the NLT)

1. Be quiet for 30 seconds. Think or write. Now what are your first impressions?
  - What’s your emotional, gut-reaction?
  - Ask a question you have (or can think of).
  - Volunteer a thought or comment- about a verse or the whole passage.
2. What is the harm of hypocrisy- to you and others?
  - How does Paul describe his own hypocrisy?
  - How does Paul feel about his hypocrisy?
  - At times when you feel like a hypocrite, what is your train of thought?
3. How does being “in Christ Jesus” heal us from the feelings and actions of hypocrisy?
  - What does it mean to be “in Christ Jesus”?
  - Is there a time in your life when you felt this reality- of being in Christ Jesus? (When was this and is there a story behind it you’d be willing to share?)

**Scripture Passages (Paul’s Letter to the Romans 7:15-25; 8:1-2)**

Romans, Chapter 7 and 8- English Standard Version Translation (ESV) 7:15 For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. 17 So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, 23 but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Romans, Chapter 7 and 8- New Living Translation (NLT) 7:15 I don’t really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don’t do it. Instead, I do what I hate. 16 But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. 17 So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. 18 And I know that nothing good lives in me, that

is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. 19 I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. 20 But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. 21 I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. 22 I love God's law with all my heart. 23 But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. 24 Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? 25 Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin. 8:1 So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. 2 And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.

### **Group Discussion (25 minutes)**

Can I get one or more volunteers to read the below quote out loud?

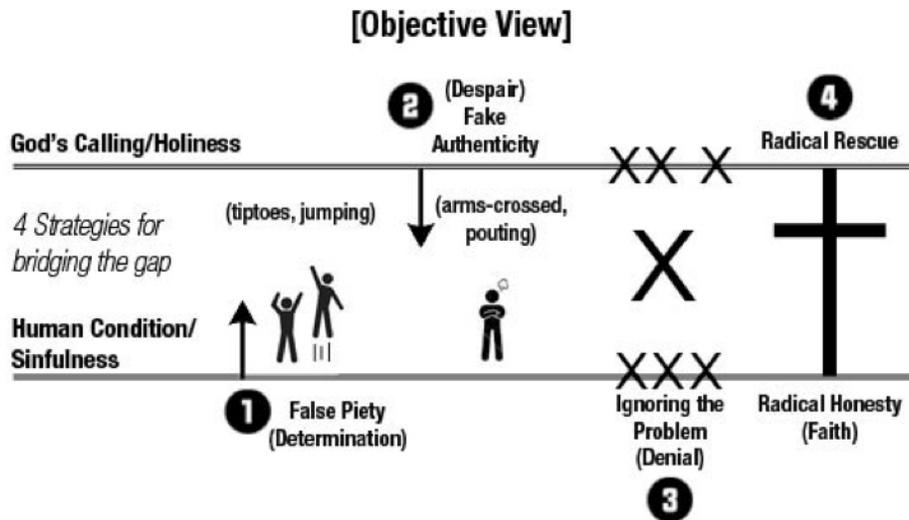
#### **Diagram: The Cross Chart**

*“ ‘The gospel’ is a phrase that Christians often use without fully understanding its significance. We speak the language of the gospel, but we rarely apply the gospel to every aspect of our lives. Yet this is exactly what God wants for us. The gospel is nothing less than “the power of God” (Rom. 1:16)...The more I grow in my Christian life, the more I grow in my awareness of God’s holiness and of my sinfulness. As I read the Bible, experience the Holy Spirit’s conviction, and live in community with other people, the extent of God’s greatness and the extent of my sin become increasingly clear and vivid. It is not that God is becoming more holy or that I am becoming more sinful. But my awareness of both is growing. I am increasingly seeing God as he actually is and myself as I actually am. As my understanding of my sin and of God’s holiness grows, something else also grows: my appreciation and love for Jesus...[His] work on my behalf become increasingly sweet and powerful to me. The cross looms larger and more central in my life as I rejoice in the Savior who died upon it...And because of what Jesus has done for us on the cross, we need not fear seeing God as he really is or admitting how broken we really are. Our hope is not in our own goodness, nor in the vain expectation that God will compromise his standards and ‘grade on a curve.’ Rather, we rest in Jesus...the One who is ‘our righteousness, holiness and redemption’ (1 Cor. 1:30).” (Thune and Walker, The Gospel-Centered Life)*

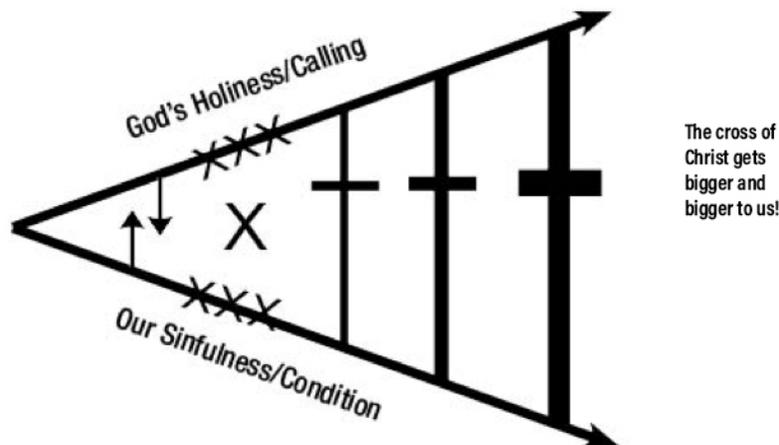
1. Think for a moment about we just read. Now study “The Cross Chart” below. What are your initial questions or comments about “The Cross Chart” [see page 3]?
2. What are some ways we try to make our human condition match up to God’s calling?
  - What thoughts, feelings, or actions make God “feel” closer to you?
  - When you feel bad about how your day went, what do you tell yourself to make you feel better- about the day or yourself?
3. When you feel the gap between what your life is and what life ought to be, which strategy (determination, despair, or denial) do you find yourself doing most often? Why?
  - What emotions or thoughts do you have when God feels far away?
  - What does despair do to you?
  - What does quitting or ignoring problems look like for you?
4. How does “The Cross Chart” suggest we handle feeling like a hypocrite?
  - When you feel good or bad about how you’re doing, what does it look like for you to rest and rejoice in *Jesus*’ performance?

5. What do you think of the following quote? (Note: “repentance” refers to Strategy 4):  
*“We believe greatness on any level equals doing the most right and the least wrong for the longest amount of time under the largest number of circumstances. But greatness in the realm of the Christian gospel is actually being the biggest, fastest, deepest repentor, because Jesus’ righteousness is enough.”* (Joe Novenson) Do you buy or sell this? Why?

## The Cross Chart



## [Subjective View]



**Group Prayer (15 Minutes)**- Ideas for communal and personal prayer

- “Share for yourself, and pray for the person sitting at 12 o’clock from you”
1. What’s one *burden* you need prayer for- for relief or healing?
  2. What’s one *sin* you’d like to (re-)confess to God?
  3. What’s one *deed* in your life or community you’d like to praise God for?
  4. What’s one *desire* stirred by this time together with God that you can pray for?