

***“Love’s Propeller” (Obedience) (Gospel Sanctification IV)***  
***(Study 10 of “Getting Personal with God: Sonship A” Series)***

**The Scripture Passage (Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, 13:1-13)**

*English Standard Version Translation (ESV)*

1 Corinthians, Chapter 13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. 4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. 13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

*New Living Translation (NLT)*

1 Corinthians, Chapter 13:1 If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. 3 If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing. 4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud 5 or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. 6 It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. 8 Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! 9 Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! 10 But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless. 11 When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. 12 Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. 13 Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.

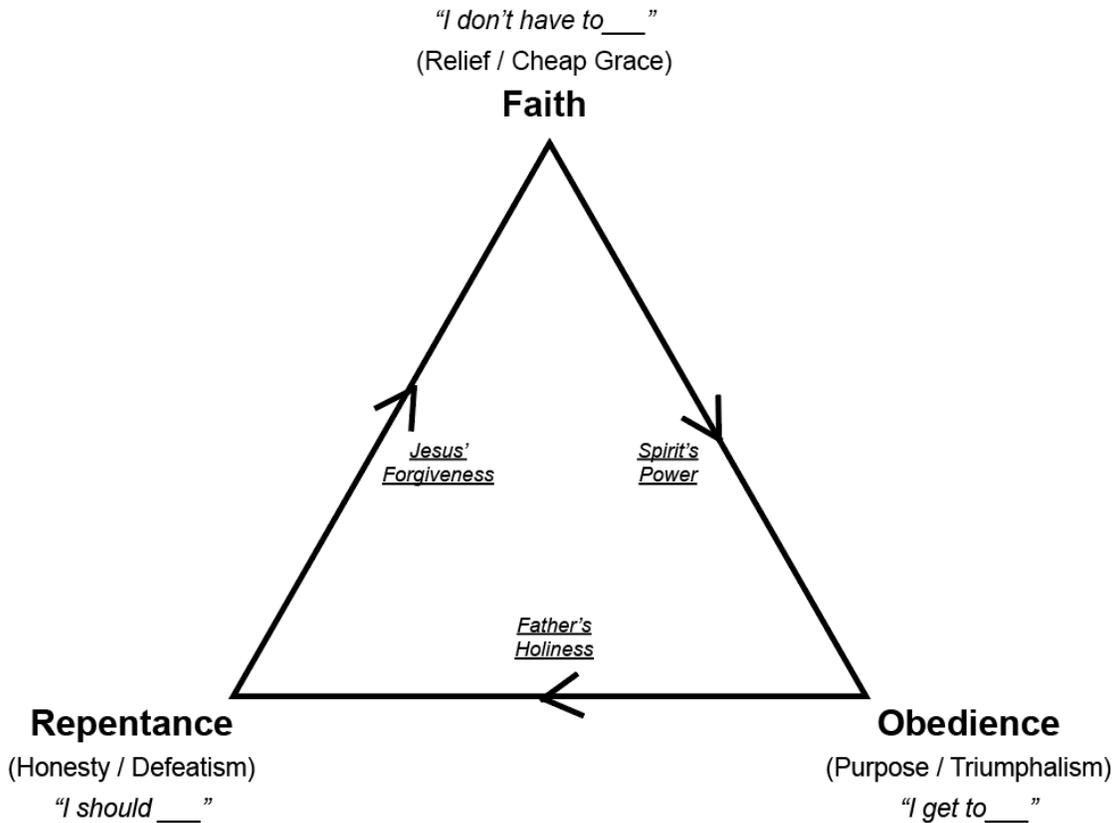
William Temple: “It’s no good giving me a play like Hamlet or King Lear and telling me to write a play like that. Shakespeare could do it; I can’t. And it is no good showing me a life like the life of Jesus and telling me to live a life like that. Jesus could do it; I can’t. But if the genius of Shakespeare could come and live in me, then I could write plays like his. And if the Spirit of Jesus could come and live in me, then I could live a life like his.”

**Reconnecting It All: Repentance, Faith, and Obedience in the Triangle Diagram**

Jesus' first recorded words in the Gospel of Mark are "repent and believe in the gospel" (1:15). Notice, Jesus didn't say just "repent" or only "believe." For Jesus (and the rest of the Scriptures), repentance and faith are inseparable. Richard Lovelace puts it this way: "An unrepentant faith is a theoretical belief...in a heart which is still in darkness concerning its own need for the grace and grandeur of God...to cover our sin"; while an unbelieving repentance is an incomplete repentance: in our hearts and lives we turn from our sins and false securities and significances, but we neglect to turn towards Jesus and "rest upon him in dependent trust."

At the same time, James in his New Testament letter reminds us that "faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (2:17). And Paul in his Letter to the Romans tells us that God gave him and the other apostles the grace and office "to bring about the obedience of faith" (1:5; study's emphasis). So, faith and obedience are also inseparable. To love God and others we need faith in God, and our faith needs love to be present and at work in life.

All this applies to the Triangle Diagram (below) in two ways. First, its corners are artificially separated, so that we can slow down, diagnose, and preach the gospel to the often rapid-fire and subtle movements of the Christian life. Second, we are merely affirming what John says in 1 John 4, verse 19: we love because He first loved us. So, if we break down the mechanics of this process, God's love for us internally renews our hearts and minds in faith and repentance, so that we are propelled externally- to words and acts of love towards God and others (obedience). All this is seen in the progression of the Triangle Diagram.



## Group Prayer

Ideas for Communal and Personal Prayer (Choose 1-2 topics to share about and pray for)

- 2 reflection questions, to set-up your choice of prayer topic below:

(1) What's one thing you learned about *yourself* in our Sonship sessions together?

(2) What's one thing you learned about *God* in our Sonship sessions together?

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?