

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

**Opening Questions** *(10 Minutes)*

1. What’s an example in your life when you had to “enter someone else’s world” (a different culture or home; a new school or workplace)?
2. What did it feel like to enter other people’s space?
  - What did it feel like initially?
  - What did it feel like after that initial honeymoon or “this is weird” period?
3. What helped you adapt to that new environment?

Let’s look at a famous Bible passage that is often read at weddings, because it is more broadly about obedience- how to love others as they are, in their spaces. (This is the third aspect- or “corner” of the Triangle Diagram from Study 7- of how biblical change works.)

**Scripture Study** *(15 Minutes)*

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (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. How does Paul address the harm of feeling missed or missing someone else?
  - Describe a time when someone failed to move towards you, and you felt missed (awkward, unloved).
  - Or describe a time when you tried and failed to move towards someone.
3. How does Paul address the healing of Jesus’ love entering in and making a connection?
  - Describe a time when someone entered into your world like Jesus or in Jesus’ name, and you felt seen or heard?
4. Would a volunteer read the William Temple quote. What does this quote tell us about the mechanics of a Christian’s ability to love like Jesus?
  - Choosing some words from 1 Corinthians 13, what are some heart-attitudes you have felt the Spirit of Jesus work in you?
  - Choosing some words from 1 Corinthians 13, what are some life-actions you have seen the Spirit of Jesus work through you?

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

1 Corinthians 13, Chapter 13- English Standard Version Translation (ESV)

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.

### 1 Corinthians 13, Chapter 13- New Living Translation (NLT)

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.”

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

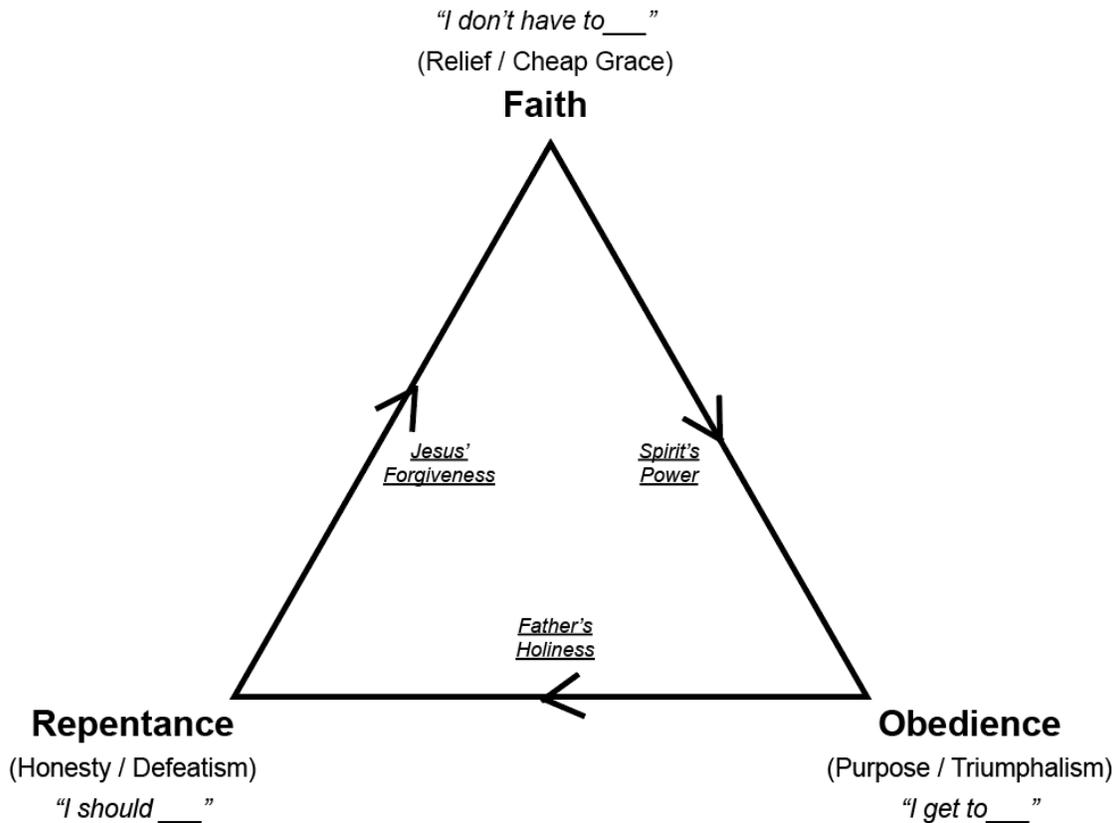
#### **Reconnecting It All: Repentance, Faith, and Obedience in the Triangle Diagram**

*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.



1. Do you remember how the triangle diagram works? Would someone or a few of you who remember explain again how this diagram works?
2. In Session 8 we discussed how repentance is an honest realization and dependence on God for internal change. How does true repentance drive us to a greater faith?
  - For example, you're caught lying about what really happened to minimize your failures or play the hero. What do you need to trust about Jesus in that moment?
  - What does a prayer of faith in that moment sound like?
3. In Session 9 we discussed how faith can look like a leap of trust in Jesus or resting in Jesus' strength and not our own. How does faith drive us to a greater obedience?

- For example, because of Jesus, God loves you just as much when you lie as when you tell the truth. How does God’s unwavering affection motivate you to treat the person you lied to?
    - What could faith in Jesus lead you to do or say in that moment?
    - What could faith in Jesus lead you to do or say going forward?
4. In Session 10 we’ve seen how obedience is empowered by the Spirit of Jesus, and it is the opportunity to live like Jesus and practice a 1 Corinthians 13 kind of love. What is an example of something you would not have done except that Jesus asked you to?
- Or describe a time when Jesus loved someone through you (you felt awkward but someone else felt loved?)
5. How does this kind of obedience drive us to a greater *repentance*?
- For example, when you start to imagine how God-come-to-us would speak in a moment of social pressure, what do you realize about how you tend to speak?
6. What’s one question you have about how the Christian life or growth works?  
 [Leader(s), resist the urge to try to answer these questions. If people aren’t just trying out a question and really want to know the answer, you can ask the group (after only listening to the question): “what thoughts do you all have about some of these questions?” Or maybe better: “I’m happy to join any of you who are interested and stick around after we pray to talk some more about these really good questions.”]

### **Group Prayer** (15-20 Minutes)

Ideas for communal and personal prayer

- “Let’s share and pray as a group this time, because it is the last session of ‘Sonship A.’ ”
  - Here are 2 reflection questions to ask and- if time permits- share about. They are meant to set-up the (by now very familiar!) 4 prayer topics 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?