

INCLINATION WORKSHOP

LESSON 03 TO DISTRUST GOD



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INCLINATION WORKSHOP

Lesson 03

The Inclination of Man to Distrust God

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God's Intelligent Design for Christ-Centered Spiritual Transformation® (IDCCST®) Christian curriculum

INTELLIGENT DESIGN FOR CHRIST-CENTERED SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE SOUL®
IDCCST®

CONTENTS

IMPORTANT: Course Prerequisite..... 4

The Inclination Workshop Curriculum 4

Workshop Goals..... 4

Materials 5

 S1) Open Power Point to slide #3 and State the Learning Goal 5

 S2) Slide #4: Define the Inclination to Distrust God..... 6

 S3) Slide #5: Are You Married to Yourself?..... 6

 S4) Slide #6: The Inclination to Love Self and Distrust God..... 7

 S5) Slide #7: The Inclination to Love Self and Distrust God..... 7

 S6) Slide #8: Precognition: The natural man works trust by precognition of the flesh..... 7

 S7) Slide #9: Precognition: Your Emotions Are a Witness to the Past 8

 S8) Slide #10: Trusting God is Not Natural 8

 S9) Slide #11: Trusting God is Not Natural 8

 S10) Slide #12: Trust is Gained by Experience With God..... 9

 S11) Slide #13: Love of Self is Trust of Self..... 9

 S12) Slide #14: Self Love Will Grieve the Soul..... 10

 S13) Slide #15: Betrayal..... 10

 S14) Slide #16: Betrayal..... 10

 S15) Slide #17: No Equity = Frustration..... 11

 S16) Slide #18: Are You Getting Ready to Divorce Yourself?..... 11

 S 17) Slide #19: Discussion Point #1 11

 S 18) Slide #20: Relationship = Reciprocation..... 11

 S 19) Slide #21 Discussion Point #2 12

 S 20) Slide 22: Discussion Point #3 12

 S 21) Slide #23: A Marriage Gone Bad..... 13

 S 22) Slide #24: Self Pity 13

 S 23) Slide #25: Who Are You Married To?..... 14

 S 24) Slide #26: The Enemy, as your “marriage counselor” 14

 S25) Slide #27: Discussion Point #4 15

 S26) Slide #28: Step 2 – Assess your vulnerability..... 16

 S 27) Slide #29: Discussion Point #5 17

 S 28) Slide 30: Discussion Point #6 19

 S 29) Slide 31: Lack of Trust = Lack of Reflection 20

 S 30) Slide 32: Discussion Point #7 22

 S 31) Slide 33: Step 3 – Identify the Deception 22

 S 32) Slide 34-37: Discussion Point #8..... 22

 S 33) Slide 38: Step 4 – Identify God’s Perception..... 24

 S 34) Slide 39: Step 5 – You Overcame 25

Closing Remarks 25

 Closing Prayer 26

 Additional Exercise 27

IMPORTANT: Course Prerequisite

In order for us to cover all of the following material, we require all attendees who are new to the Inclination Workshops to have viewed the basic tutorials and practices regarding your cycles of growth and priesthood found in the courses “Why Christians Suffer” and “Priesthood and Prophecy”. These are important building blocks for your understanding. We also require attendees to study the curriculum prepared for this workshop.

Why Christians Suffer: <http://www.s8wministries.org/course.php?id=15>

Priesthood and Prophecy: <http://www.s8wministries.org/lesson.php?id=75&lesson=what-the-bible-says-about-the-christian-priesthood>

The Inclination Workshop Curriculum

The Inclination Workshop was created as part of God’s Intelligent Design for Christ-Centered Spiritual Transformation® (IDCCST®) Christian education offered by Second 8th Week® Ministries to provide believers with the right tools to understand how to overcome themselves, the world, and the devil as the Bible says, “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” (1 John 4:4)

This curriculum can be used as an individual study guide or facilitated through group discussion. It supports both the “Win the Battle for Your Mind” course and “Why Christians Suffer” course and is designed to work with the “Spiritual Workout Results Guide”(SWRG). It is meant to be flexible, allowing you to work from any particular focus presented in either course. You are encouraged to track your daily results using your SWRG as the workshop progresses.

Workshop Goals

The goal of each Inclination Lesson is to steer believers through a 5-step planning process designed for them to overcome themselves, the world, and the devil. Attendees will (1) use the Spiritual Warfare Wheel (5-Step Planning Process) to assist them to overcome themselves, the world, and the devil, (2) track their results using the Spiritual Workout Results Guide (SWRG), and (3) utilize the 8 Steps to Building New Shields chart to break down barriers. This course is based on the 3-phase cycle of growth: revelation, resistance, and reward. The course is meant to assist believers as they move into the resistance phase to identify the natural rhythms that tend to occur.

The Inclination curriculum will cover 18 separate inclinations of man. Why is it important to learn the 18 inclinations of man? Because God called us to overcome. The first step and the hardest is to overcome is ourselves. We are our own worst enemy. We have to find out why that is.

Materials

- 1) Course curriculum: Lesson 02:
Download here: <http://s8wministries.org/direct-downloads/inclination-workshop-lesson-03.pdf>
- 2) Resource: 18 Inclinations of Man. Read inclinations #2: View the lesson here:
<http://www.s8wministries.org/general.php?id=52>
- 3) Spiritual Warfare Wheel: The 5-Step Planning Process
Download here: <http://s8wministries.org/direct-downloads/spiritual-warfare-wheel.doc>
- 4) 8 Steps to Building New Shields
Download here: <http://s8wministries.org/direct-downloads/8-steps-to-building-new-shields.doc>
- 5) Spiritual Workout Results Guide (SWRG)
Download your free SWRG here:
<http://s8wministries.org/speciality-pdf/spiritual-workout-results-guide.pdf>
- 6) SWRG Users' Manual
Download your free SWRG Users' Manual here:
<http://s8wministries.org/speciality-pdf/SWRG-Users-Manual.pdf>
- 7) Power Point Presentation:
Download here: <http://s8wministries.org/direct-downloads/inclination-workshop-lesson-03.ppsx>

S1) Open Power Point to slide #3 and State the Learning Goal

Workshop Goals: The Inclination to Distrust God

You are to work from your Lesson Plan, reading thoroughly the information that corresponds to each slide in preparation for the workshop class. Course curriculum covers the 2nd inclination of man: To Distrust God to accomplish these learning goals:

(1) The inclination of man to distrust God is given a spiritual identity (marriage to self) to reveal corresponding truths behind the inclination to distrust of God. (2) The natural man gets to a place of “trust” by examination of the witnesses of the flesh. Like putting on a pair of eye glasses where you only see your own point of view. Your emotions are a witness to the past and will confirm your suspicions and this is why you trust your own judgment and thinking patterns. God wants to defeat this long standing tradition of the flesh and this is the purpose of your growth cycles (revelation, resistance, and reward). (3) Because of the fall of man, trust is not man’s

natural inclination. Trust has to be learned through covenant contact with the sanctified tools of Jesus Christ for new habits and new thinking patterns to develop.

Opening Scripture: Bible says, “But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not *trust* in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we *trust* that he will yet deliver us.” (2 Corinthians 1:9-10)

S2) Slide #4: Define the Inclination to Distrust God

Read the text: From the 18 Inclinations of Man Handbook. Inclination #2, The Inclination to Distrust God: The operation of God in faith is to place trust in God Himself when we engage our fellowship with Him on the grounds of Jesus Christ. This fellowship is never breached or broken. God makes known the consistency of His love and care, which we experience consistently when faith operates with the tools of Christ. Trust is first built in each of us individually and then built into the body with one another by this same operation.

The inclination of man, though, is to place trust in the voice that secures the drive of his aspiration rather than his love for God (as Adam did in the garden). That is the pattern of the fall. The inclination of man is to follow that pattern and this is why the natural man places trust in his logic. He tests spiritual things on the grounds of logic working with aspiration. He allows the hands of his logic to explore to confirm to his senses that spiritual things are lining up with his perception. On the other hand, God calls faith to reason with grace, putting the hands of logic into your pockets.

S3) Slide #5: Are You Married to Yourself?

It’s hard for many to get at the inclination to distrust God because of pre conceived ideas that led to the belief that trusting God has to do with believing God for favorable outcomes and reversal of contrary circumstances. So, when I say that the natural inclination of man is to distrust God, many of you are going to think I’m referring to a lack of believing God will pull through for you. And that’s not what this is about at all.

So, we’re going to come at this troublesome inclination from another angle to quickly put the inclination not to trust God into perspective for you. We’re going to start by giving it a spiritual identity. We know that God uses marriage to help us identify who we are in Christ, espoused to Him for the purpose of fruit bearing in His kingdom (John 15:8).

When a marriage relationship is considered, there are many corresponding realities that help us relate to the inclination to distrust God that will describe a strategy of Satan, which the Lord lays bare for our discernment. I’m going to suggest to you that the inclination of man to distrust God is like being married to yourself. It’s a form of self love.

United to self, God becomes the stranger. We are inclined to distrust strangers. We are inclined to put strangers at a distance: Who are you? Do I know you? Back off!

S4) Slide #6: The Inclination to Love Self and Distrust God

We know that when we come into covenant with God that a severing takes place. God removes us from the kingdom of darkness and we are joined to God by the Spirit, and a covenant relationship begins with Him (1 Corinthians 6:17).

But the inclination of man is to go back to love of self and distrust of God. This makes man indifferent to God. When indifferent to God a person becomes numb to grace and the things of this world seem real and the things of God seem distant and unreal. You see, Satan has good reason to nurture this mindset of self love.

S5) Slide #7: The Inclination to Love Self and Distrust God

We know that man was created by God for God. You were created to love God and that is in fact your original design and God's command, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength." (Matthew 22:37)

But we're not talking about that. We're talking about a familiar pattern of self love the natural man goes back to that God wants us to be aware of because He will challenge it and address it for healing.

S6) Slide #8: Precognition: The natural man works trust by precognition of the flesh

The natural man works trust by precognition of the flesh. What is precognition? From the 18 Inclinations of Man Handbook. Inclination #2, The Inclination to Distrust God:

"Precognition is an interesting word that is useful in the discussion of the inclination of man. I am not referring to knowledge of a future gained through extrasensory means. Let's examine the other definition of precognition: (1) The examination of witnesses and other parties before a trial in order to supply a legal ground for prosecution. (b) the evidence established in such an examination. (*dictionary.reference.com*)

Every conflict of life is like a trial and you have to go back into your history to collect witnesses that will testify at the trial to help supply the grounds for prosecution.

The natural man gets to a place of “trust” by examination of the witnesses of the flesh. Like putting on a pair of eye glasses where you only see your own point of view. Your emotions are a witness to the past and will confirm your suspicions and this is why you trust your own judgment and thinking patterns. God wants to defeat this long standing tradition of the flesh and this is the purpose of your growth cycles (revelation, resistance, and reward).

S7) Slide #9: Precognition: Your Emotions Are a Witness to the Past

Precognition is also a great word to use to describe the muscle memory of the flesh.

Have you ever heard the expression “history repeats itself”? A natural rhythm tends to occur when you do something repetitively. It is easy enough to envision the motion of life: when you exercise, when you shop, when you work. It’s easy to go through the motions because you know what to expect, you know what is coming up. The natural man works trust by precognition of the flesh, trusting the natural rhythms around him to gather evidence that can be used as grounds to say, “I can trust because I know what is going to happen next”. God calls this a projection of the imagination.”

S8) Slide #10: Trusting God is Not Natural

“The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.” (2 Samuel 22:3)

We learn from the Bible the importance of trusting God, but trusting God is not something that comes natural. Let me prove it to you. When asked to trust God, most people don’t know what to do. Questions arise in the mind.

- Does this mean that I don’t take the steps to supply my need? Do I wait for God to do it? Does this show Him I trust Him?
- If I take the steps to provide for myself, does that mean I don’t trust God?
- Do I not take medication? Or do I not take medication?
- Do I show I trust God by refusing medical attention?
- Do you mean that I can pretty much do what I want and I can trust God that He loves me?

Do you see? The questions show a lack of trust.

S9) Slide #11: Trusting God is Not Natural

Even though trusting God is man’s original design, because of the fall of man, trust is not man’s natural inclination. Trust has to be learned through covenant contact with the sanctified tools of Jesus Christ for new habits and new thinking patterns to develop.

Yes, we are equipped by God's holy knowledge to know how to establish our trust in God. We are strengthened by His Holy Spirit as He guides us into this experience as we co-labor with Him. But trust is not an automatic thing, it's what the Spirit teaches you as you exercise your will with the things of Christ.

S10) Slide #12: Trust is Gained by Experience With God

The more you experience regeneration (the new life of Christ being formed within), the more you come to realize that trust is gained by experience with God through your cycles of growth.

You know what it means to trust God to sustain your faith and supply the grace you need to know Him. You're able to compare the trust the natural man works with and the trust the spiritual man works with. The trust the natural man works with is repeatedly violated, which leaves you on your guard (suspicious) of the next violation. The trust the spiritual man works with is repeatedly built up and reinforced, which leaves you strong in God's grace.

We're coming at the inclination from this angle (trust is NOT man's natural inclination) because I don't want you to dismiss the challenge to distrust God and make assumptions based on your covenant relationship with God whereby the challenge is brushed off rather than overcome and Satan's strategies go on unseen and unchallenged.

S11) Slide #13: Love of Self is Trust of Self

Let's get back to learning more about self love. Love of self is trust of self, which is a recipe for disaster. We're not talking about the healthy love of self whereas we care for ourselves, we're talking about the inclination to develop an unhealthy relationship with ourselves in our mind.

“He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” (John 12:25)

The inclination of man is to follow this pattern of self love and this is why the natural man places trust in his logic. He tests himself on the grounds of logic working with aspiration. He allows the hands of his logic to explore (the past) to confirm (gain a witness) to his senses that what he is seeing and hearing is lining up with his perception and expectation.

There are familiar self serving thought patterns of the aspiration that are familiar to all that God will challenge for healing.....

1. Instant gratification.....Here we see a lack of trust in God.
2. Intolerant of others..... Here we see a lack of trust in God.
3. Life serves me..... . Here we see a lack of trust in God.

4. Everyone should love me..... Here we see a lack of trust in God.
5. I want the best for myself..... Here we see a lack of trust in God.

Each one of these manifestations of self love will grieve the soul.

S12) Slide #14: Self Love Will Grieve the Soul

When I am grieved, do I look for closure by placing blame or projecting with my imagination for resolve? This too would show a lack of trusting God. Trying to bring comfort to my soul with closure (the peace of the world), but not receiving the witness (of the Spirit) will only lead to more frustration.

God has a plan is to heal the soul of these inclinations by forming in the soul these virtues of Christ: patience, kindness, longsuffering, and the joy of serving God and your brethren in the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

S13) Slide #15: Betrayal

As in any relationship where you are the center of attention and the relationship is self serving, you'll feel betrayed when the aspiration is not confirmed. When we rightly weigh the inclination to distrust God on the scale of Christ/truth we see the Enemy's strategy to encourage a relationship with self to continue to provoke lack of trust in God.

“But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.” (2 Corinthians 1:9-10)

S14) Slide #16: Betrayal

About Betrayal --- Betrayal speaks of being suspicious of motives (either your own or someone else's). A threat is perceived to your sense of security, which makes you uncertain of where you stand. Aspiration is the natural man's fight (to build new shields) or flight (to build new shields) survival response to perceived betrayals or threats.

The spiritual identity we gave this inclination of man (marriage to self) helps you to see that you have a lifetime of experience betraying yourself and feeling threatened. We're talking here about things you picked up through life experiences as well as things people said to you and things you said to others. When we feel betrayed there is a tendency to preserve the relationship with self rather than to step back and see the opportunities God is giving for overcoming. We're more likely to think God is addressing someone else rather than ourselves.

S15) Slide #17: No Equity = Frustration

You can understand why there is no equity in the kingdom of the flesh. This is the reason for your frustration. The inclination of man is to respond to this lack of equity by going back to a previous point of betrayal or threat to measure how he should feel and how he should respond in an effort to find the equity the flesh says it needs as a witness.

S16) Slide #18: Are You Getting Ready to Divorce Yourself?

And because divorce follows betrayal, you also have a lifetime of experience trying to understand yourself as you fit yourself into a self perspective, and a lifetime of experience moving towards divorcing yourself, trying to get free of yourself and these inner entanglements of the mind and emotions.

About Divorce – Divorce is a process of seeking control, attempting to break away, to develop new interests, new passions, to redefine yourself, to take a stand, to make a statement, to be independent, to make others conform to you.

If you love yourself, you are headed for divorce. Don't be mistaken. Divorcing self is not putting off the old man. To put off the old man is what we do to co-labor with the Spirit as we put on the new man in Christ (Ephesians 4:22). Divorcing self is the effort of the old man to change himself

S 17) Slide #19: Discussion Point #1

What are some ways in which the concept of “divorcing self” is seen in our thinking patterns? What I want you to do here is first address what the natural man is seeking for or responding to when in conflict with self or others and then put a voice to it. For example:
Seeking for identity: The natural man says, “This does not define me.”
Seeking for control: The natural man says, “I will not let this defeat me.”
Responding to suspicion: The natural man says, “I’m shocked by your behavior.”

S 18) Slide #20: Relationship = Reciprocation

When in a relationship with yourself you'll be reciprocating (to yourself and others) either your vulnerabilities or your aspiration. Both are a heavy burden God does not want you to carry. When married to self, your spouse is like a mirror to reveal the spot that is in you, which is what you see every time you look in the mirror.

This is many times the reason behind defensive remarks and behavior. If the mind is defensive the mind is carrying offense. This again is a burden to the soul that God will challenge to help you break free.

When married to Christ He says, “You are fair My love, there is no spot in you.” (Song of Solomon 4:7). Reciprocation in the priesthood keeps the conscience pure.

The fog is lifting and we’re beginning to see more clearly the problem of distrusting of God. When asking questions about the inclination to distrust God you’re asking, “In what way did the inclination work its way into my perspective to the point where this became a problem for me?” We’re taking note of the scenario that God in His mercy set for my overcoming. I can see that the situation awoke in me these inclinations. And because I am working with the knowledge and I’m wrestling with grace for answers about this for my liberty, the Lord opened my understanding to this. And because He opened my understanding to that then I could see why I was so vulnerable to it. It’s a process towards your liberty. We have an assurance that He is assisting me not to be so vulnerable there anymore because Christ can be my shield by the understanding gained.

S 19) Slide #21 Discussion Point #2

Discuss the ways in which a marriage to self is destructive. For example. . .

A marriage to self is destructive because you’ll respond to the burden of vulnerability and aspiration by trying to cast it off (divorce). When does this happen? When it is challenged. The natural man’s fight or flight instinct is turned on when in conflict, when an offense is perceived. How will you respond? Will you go through the mental process of divorce or will you put off the old man by turning on your reflection and working with the grace of God?

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.” (Ephesians 4:22)

Always remember: Christ will correct all inequity of thought by the rules of His mercy so the soul can progress in the unity of charity.

S 20) Slide 22: Discussion Point #3

Compare divorce (of self) to dying to the old man and discuss the ways in which they differ. For example:

1. What purpose does divorce (of self) serve the natural man?
2. How does that fall short of God’s purpose?
3. Explain how precognition of the flesh work with divorce of self?
4. Divorce (of self) is a process of seeking control which is simply another way the flesh is exhibiting a need to trust what it can predict. Whereas dying to the old man is what happens when we accept the restrictions of the covenant and follow Christ through the

pattern He set: revelation, resistance, and reward. As the Spirit of God works to confirm Christ, the thinking patterns that strengthened the old man becomes weak and pass away.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

S 21) Slide #23: A Marriage Gone Bad

As in all marriages gone bad, spouses begin to vilify each other, loath each other, and criticize each other. If the spouse is you, guess what happens?

- You vilify yourself. Shows a lack of trust in God.
- You loath yourself. Shows a lack of trust in God.
- You criticize yourself. Shows a lack of trust in God.

You're feeling. . .

- Inferiority --- shows lack of trust in God.
- Insecurity --- shows lack of trust in God.
- Inadequacy --- shows lack of trust in God.

Know this: The relationship you have with yourself will spill over into your relationship with others. You're noticing feelings of resentment, guilt, or shame and it's normal to want to blame other people for how you feel. This too shows a lack of trust in God.

S 22) Slide #24: Self Pity

We often hear tough love therapy about not feeling sorry for ourselves and how destructive that is. . .

- Why is it so hard?
- Why doesn't anyone like me?

and then we try to work against it by reversing the thoughts of self pity and telling ourselves how much God loves us and how good He is. But underneath self pity is Satan's strategy of self love. This is why Jesus repeated to Peter 3 times, “Do you love me more than these?” (John 21:15)

Remember, you're not being asked to beat yourself up, saying, “Why do I love myself more than I love God?” God is simply identifying the root of the inclination to distrust God and uncovering Satan's strategy to lure us into becoming indifferent to God and numb to His grace.

To love self means to put confidence in self just like Peter took confidence in his abilities as a fisherman. He knew the waters, he knew the tides, he knew the fish, he knew his nets. There was a rhythm there that he was comfortable with, that he could count on until God pointed out the weakness of that trust the night Peter was out fishing and caught nothing. But at God's word the fish filled the net to overflowing. (John 21:6)

People want to get to that place of overflowing in God, but don't want to go through the process of getting there. Even then, most have their eye on the fish (increase to fill the belly/lust), not the overflow of grace to fill the soul.

God has to break the dependence and confidence and appetite of the flesh and this is why He will challenge the rhythm of the natural man for the survival of the flesh.

S 23) Slide #25: Who Are You Married To?

Marriage = Building

If you are in a relationship with yourself you can't trust God because you are building with someone else (yourself). And this relationship you are in is a full time job.

- Seeking closure is a full time job.
- Seeking control is a full time job.
- Being self centered is a full time job.

One would think that if you love yourself you would respect and care for yourself. But remember, this love of self is a marriage. You are in a love/hate relationship in a marriage gone bad and Satan puts out his "Marriage Counseling" sign on his door and waits for you to come knocking.

S 24) Slide #26: The Enemy, as your "marriage counselor"

The Enemy, as your "marriage counselor", offers to lead you through these troubled waters. So, we have to assess your vulnerability in the inclination to distrust God and then identify the Enemy's deception, and prepare yourself to stand in God's perspective. Beware, once you've buried the aspiration, the Enemy may be seen sitting at the grave site in his vigil to awaken the inclination.

The good news, my friend, is that as your faith labors with the spiritual tools God sanctified in Jesus' name, Jesus is living through you and you're learning to trust God to increase your soul in the likeness of Christ and learning to trust the fruit of Christ, that it is of greater value than the fruits of iniquity.

If you are in covenant with God, you are married to Jesus Christ and God wants you to believe that He set the terms (boundaries) of this covenant relationship in Jesus Christ to engage you on the level of Himself, not on the level of sin.

It's necessary to believe that He will keep His promise to preserve your faith in Jesus Christ as you keep your vow of faith to increase only in His house, to sow into His invisible kingdom. Active believing begets trust. Active believing means observing Jesus in His knowledge and then doing (following His record).

You are to believe that a sowing takes place either in the kingdom of darkness with the knowledge of the flesh, or a sowing is taking place in the kingdom of God with the knowledge of Jesus Christ. By experience you learn what happens when sowing into the kingdom of darkness and what happens when sowing into the kingdom of God.

God is asking you to trust that a sowing is taking place in His invisible kingdom when you fulfill your vow of faith with the tools of Christ to increase His house. You learn by experience that the rewards reaped of sowing into God's kingdom is the increase of your soul in the virtue of Christ, which in turn preserves you in Him.

“Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.” (Psalm 16:1)

S25) Slide #27: Discussion Point #4

Discuss what happens when the aspiration is put to rest by your labor at that altar of Christ. For example, the Enemy's counsel is no longer needed. You have espoused yourself to Jesus Christ. You are married to another. Your union with Jesus Christ by His covenant terms and power of the Spirit frees you from the love/hate relationship you have with yourself.

God breaks the cycle of self love by teaching you to love and trust Him. Which brings us to our new experience seen in the first paragraph of the 18 Inclinations of Man handbook: “The operation of God in faith is to place trust in God when we engage our fellowship with Him on the grounds of Jesus Christ. This fellowship is never breached or broken.

God makes known the consistency of His love and care, which we experience consistently when faith operates with the tools of Christ. Trust is first built in each of us individually and then built into the body with one another by this same operation.”

While watching the film “Act of Valor” the Lord drew my attention to a code of honor among soldiers. It was said that, “What we know about each other strengthens our bond as operators. There is a brotherhood between us. We depend on each other more than a family.”

We see this trust in operation in the priesthood of each believer. We all share the same knowledge of Christ, the same spiritual tools, and experience the same cycles of growth and work of the Spirit. Our experience is uniquely our own, but the bond we share in Christ as operators of the same grace and the same faith, brings us into one mind in Him. There is a brotherhood between us. We depend on each other. We are the family of God. We are the army of God.

S26) Slide #28: Step 2 – Assess your vulnerability

If you have identified the inclination to distrust God, God is addressing the love/hate relationship the adversary would like to draw you into. Your heavenly Father is wanting to point out to you the contrast between trust and lack of trust to help you understand where you are vulnerable and to help you discern how Satan provokes a response from the flesh.

The points covered thus far outline your vulnerability in the inclination to distrust God. When you feel vulnerable you feel the pain of the Lord addressing those areas. This is why grace and suffering work together to form the virtue of Christ in the soul. We accept God's will that we suffer the death of the aspiration to gain the life of Christ, but our reflection is on what we are gaining in Christ, not what we are losing.

We are gaining insight into Satan's strategy to captivate our attention with the same problem over and over again. When the trial occurs does it seem like you're reliving the same emotions, hearing the same thoughts turn round in your head? It's much like watching television or film reruns where a specific line has been made famous and watching the movie again, the same line pops out at you.

"You can't handle the truth!" That was Jack Nicholson's famous line in "A Few Good Men". "Round up the usual suspects." That's a famous line from Casablanca. The line makes the movie memorable and it's the same way with the natural rhythm of the natural man when a situation is repeated, the same troubling thought makes the situation stick in your head in a certain way that you're vulnerable to. God wants to address this for healing because Satan will encourage you to watch the reruns to harm you.

*Remember to track your results using the Spiritual Workout Results Guide (SWRG). Checking off the emotional responses you experience helps you make the connection from your vulnerability to your emotions and gets your mind asking questions and discerning.

We gain a great benefit by enduring (choosing faith) this affliction (contradiction to our peace) because the end of the cycle (testing of faith) is fruit (the virtue of Christ is born in the heart) and we obtain the joy of God's reward.

But there's something else going on too. Due to a misplaced expectations you will also experience some vexation and frustration. God wants to also address this for healing because Satan will encourage this too, to harm you. God will soon replace frustration with peace as He lays bare Satan's lie and a choice is made to stand in the testimony of Christ.

*When you ask about misplaced expectations, remember to track your results using your SWRG. Identify the yoke you are carrying. Identify the expectation of any of the 5 facets of the flesh and record your results.

The inclination of the flesh is to not assess your vulnerability, to shield itself from pain and discomfort by navigating around it. But if we allow ourselves this shield and try to navigate around God's work then the work does not take place. Therefore reflection is necessary to recognize a vulnerability in this area where God wants to bring healing and then make a commitment to work with the Spirit to overcome.

***Building New Shields:** Keep yourself aware of the steps taken to build new shields. For each of us, there is a particular step when taken that sets off the alarm that we are vulnerable to building new shields. Can you identify your trigger step?

- | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Vulnerability | 2. Suspicion | 3. Projection | 4. Aggravation |
| 5. Inferiority | 6. Reasoning | 7. Breach of Trust | 8. Building New Shields |

Remember that God will show you the progress of your growth in dream symbolism and this is helpful to draw upon and reflect, but I want you to also remember that dreams do not justify us. In other words, be careful that you don't use dreams to shield your vulnerability, which then changes your testimony.

That can happen sometimes and I want you to be aware of it. When using a dream to shield yourself, what you walk away with is a mindset, "See, my faith is perfect, God is showing me that in a dream. I know there isn't anything wrong with my faith." Do you see the change in testimony? The testimony is restricted to covering (shielding) condemnation, frustration, resentment, and guilt. A different testimony emerges when the dream symbolism is unfolded in defense of Christ and the edification is not drawn back to self, but builds for the body.

S 27) Slide #29: Discussion Point #5: Discuss the Vulnerability Experienced in the Inclination to Distrust God

Discuss the vulnerability experienced in the inclination to distrust God. I'm going to give you 4 examples you may discuss by drawing from the material we've covered thus far. Once you understand the exercise you'll have more opportunities to build this list for further discussions.

1. I am vulnerable to building a relationship with myself. This leaves me vulnerable to Satan’s strategy to captivate my attention with the same problem over and over again. As I look into the mirror of self to reciprocate either my vulnerability or an aspiration, I’m placing trust in my logic. The Enemy is hoping I will explore the past to confirm (gain witness) to my senses that what I’m seeing and hearing is lining up with my perception and expectation.

This pattern of building with self is grieving to the soul. When I am grieved I look for closure by placing blame or projecting with my imagination for resolve. This shows a trust of self and a lack of trust in God. I’m trying to bring comfort to my soul with closure (the peace of the world), but not receiving the witness (of the Spirit). This is Satan’s strategy to set me up for further frustration.

- When we trust God we have learned to reflect on a higher purpose (opportunities for fruit bearing) and a higher power (grace) to enter into rest. We learn to accept the higher witness (of the Spirit). What we experience is God subduing the imagination to grace.

“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” (Philippians 3:21)

2. I am vulnerable to the need to be the center of attention. If it wasn’t about me, I wouldn’t care. This lays me open to self pity, self doubt, inferiority, insecurity, and inadequacy. This shows a trust of self and a lack of trust in God.

Question: What measure is this? The measure of Christ or the measure of the flesh?

Answer: The measure of the flesh.

- When we trust God our eyes are on the bigger picture, which is God’s plan to fit our reason to grace. We trust Him to do that.

“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.” (2 Corinthians 3:5)

3. I am vulnerable to live under the rule of fear. Fear results in new shields being built to prove myself to myself and others. This shows confidence in the flesh and lack of trust in God.

- When we trust God we don’t need any other shield but Jesus Christ. This is seen in the process of building trust. If we simply say things like, “I’m learning to trust God rather than the flesh,” and we deny the due processes, we never discern Satan’s strategies and we do not experience a change in our thinking patterns and as a result we fall into the same trap over and over again.

“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” (Philippians 3:3)

4. I am vulnerable to seeking control. This makes me vulnerable to vilify, loath, and criticize myself or others when things are out of control and this leads me to blame others for how I feel. This shows lack of trust in God.

- When we trust God we are reflecting on the ability God gives us to please Him through faith to reciprocate the image of Christ in His knowledge and the power of grace to sustain His work in us. This changes us from being indifferent to God to paying attention to what He is addressing and allowing the Spirit to do His work.

“For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.” (2 Corinthians 13:4)

S 28) Slide 30: Discussion Point #6

Discuss what changes when we are no longer vulnerable to build a relationship with self, no longer the center of attention, no longer under the fear of your own opinion of yourself, and no longer seeking control.

Points to consider:

1. **Our focus changes.** We are more focused on building the kingdom of God through prayers and spiritual sacrifices at that altar rather than building self esteem.
2. **Our experience changes.** Our senses get dull from the experience of the flesh dominating our thoughts. Focus on the 5 steps sharpens our focus on the grace of God. You actually have to work hard to get past the vulnerability to ride the waves of God’s grace just like a surfer has to work hard to get past the surf to ride the waves of the ocean.
3. **We stop making assumptions** based on our feelings and begin to learn that God is pointing out to us how harmful the inclination is to ourselves and to others. As a result we are more focused on glorifying God through the fruit of overcoming rather than nursing hurt feelings.
4. **Our testimony changes.** We have more to share about our experiences of overcoming.
5. **Our reflection changes.** Instead of the mind digging up old emotional quotes that seemed to work in the past to bring “clarity”, you work with the knowledge of the covenant to express Christ.
6. **The witness changes.** No longer will you seek the witness of the flesh to measure how you should feel or how you should respond, for you have learned that the witness of the Spirit is gained by your choice to use Jesus’ spiritual tools.

God wants to challenge the inclination of man. “Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.” (Deuteronomy 8:5)

S 29) Slide 31: Lack of Trust = Lack of Reflection

There is a natural flow of things that will take over your thought life (your reflections) unless you make the effort to challenge that natural rhythm by seeking out godly reflections. It is God’s covenant plan and purpose to teach us this.

We see this in the example of the 12 spies that were sent by Moses to go into the Promised Land and gather information. We’re going to go into this account in scripture. What I want you to pay attention to first of all is the command to “bring of the fruit of the land”.

Numbers 13:17-22

¹⁷And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain:

¹⁸And see the land, what it is, and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many;

¹⁹And what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds;

²⁰And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the firstripe grapes.

²¹So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath.

“And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land.” (verse 20) Here we see Christ preached to us, how God is setting our focus, showing us what He wants us to pay attention to. And that is, the fruit of Christ being formed in the soul.

Notice also that God is sending the 12 spies on a journey of discernment to teach us about reflection. They were to search out whether or not the land is fat or lean, whether there are

wooded areas or not, whether the people lived in tents or strong holds, whether the place is good or bad, the people strong or weak, few or many. Do you see how our heavenly Father applies this now to us who are in Christ?

Each cycle of growth presents the inclination, which God wants searched out to see the opportunity for fruit bearing. Assessing your vulnerability and identifying the deception is part of the process of “searching out the land”.

We know from reading the Bible that 10 of the 12 spies came back with an evil report. They represent the natural man. Despite the fact that the fruit of the Promised Land was as abundant as promised (it required 2 men to carry a bunch of grapes on a pole between them (verse 23), the 10 refused to reflect on the things God set before them, they did not gain strength through reflection. God rewarded that choice. They did not enter into the Promised Land.

Lack of reflection resulted in fear dominating their thoughts rather than trust in God, for they said, “Yes, the land is just as you described it, overflowing with goodness, but the people are strong, the cities are walled, the giants are there. . .” They drew a testimony from the witness of the flesh saying, “We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.” Let’s read those verses now.

Numbers 13:27-32

²⁷ And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.

²⁸ Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.

²⁹ The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.

³⁰ And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

³¹ But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.

³² And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched. . .

S 30) Slide 32: Discussion Point #7

Discuss how the lack of reflection resulted in a lack of trust towards God for the children of Israel and then relate that to your own growth cycles.

S 31) Slide 33: Step 3 – Identify the Deception

Our battle is not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers. It's a process to learn not to simply set the challenge aside, but to overcome it. It's important for us to get to the place where we identify the deception, that which lays buried under the vulnerability, and it's one of the hardest places to go because it's human nature to try to find the easy way out, to take the shortcut. The inclination is to prevent the process by blocking it off in your mind when things become too difficult or painful. But it's actually very liberating to see the deception.

In every vulnerability there lies a promise of the Enemy to sidestep the due process of faith that God calls us to that we may experience life in Christ.

A promise is seen in each vulnerability, that we can build our life here on this earth, in our minds, with our hands; that being true to our ourselves is the way to wholeness. Each promise made by the Enemy leaves you fending off oh-so-lame proposals (deceptions) in your mind.

S 32) Slide 34-37: Discussion Point #8

We are going to look at the same vulnerabilities we discussed earlier to pin point the promise (deception) God is busy helping us relate to so we can see it for what it is and co-labor with the Spirit to free ourselves from it. The soul was molding confidence with those things that God is now removing.

“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.” 2 Corinthians 2:11

1. I am vulnerable to building a relationship with myself, which makes it difficult to trust God.

The promise is always the same: life outside of Christ and how to get at that life without building with God, by sidestepping the due process, and by placing yourself at the center of attention.

Deception: The deception is in the effort of the Enemy to keep you focused on the wrong thing.

2. I am vulnerable to the need to be the center of attention. This lays me open to self pity, self doubt, inferiority, insecurity, and inadequacy. The promise is that you can protect yourself with old shields and new shields.

Deception: The deception is in the building of shields. You can make dozens of shields and display the colors and images of each when the occasion requires. The instant satisfaction you get makes it seem like you got what you wanted, but the shackles simply got tighter.

3. I am vulnerable to live under the fear of another's opinion. The promise here is that you can use aspiration to prove yourself to fight off fear.

Deception: The deception is in the wrong measure. When we were in darkness we used fruitless passions to measure truth. The Deceiver desires to draw us back to measure our well being and potential for increase by the signals we receive from those around us. But, the true measure is Jesus Christ who is our life. Our well being and increase is measured from that reality.

4. I am vulnerable to seeking control. This is Satan's testimony. He wanted to control God and gave mankind this training and indoctrination. This vulnerability lays me open to vilify, loath, and criticize myself when things are out of control. This shows lack of trust in God. The promise here is that control means rest, equity, and wholeness, and it does not.

Deception: Control is an illusion. It is believed that because the problem began in the mind it can be worked out in the mind, but it didn't start in the mind, the deception was started by Satan and was worked into man's mind.

You're going to be wanting to ask yourself what Satan's testimony encourages. What does Satan's testimony of independence encourage in us? It encourages us to separate ourselves from the sanctified tools of Jesus Christ.

Romans 13:12-14

¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

¹³ Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

¹⁴ But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

S 33) Slide 38: Step 4 – Identify God’s Perception

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” (Ephesians 6:10)

Your first response to the challenge of every day trials is the most important response. God’s view is the only perspective you want to carry with you into battle. So, how do you do that? How do you make sure that God’s perspective is your first response and the only perspective you carry with you to battle? You do that by reflecting.

Reflection is valuable because you’re comparing 2 kingdoms, 2 frames of knowledge, 2 inspirations. Your faith is at work discerning Christ. The Holy Spirit is working with your reflections (this is called the anointing) to confirm Jesus Christ and His kingdom knowledge, to open that up to you so that you acknowledge His truth as worthy of reciprocation to God.

A common expression used among fitness buffs is “keep your core turned on.” I want to use this expression to help you understand why the elders of Second 8th Week Ministries will repeatedly say “keep your reflections turned on”. Reflection is the key to faith and that’s why we’ll keep asking you, “Are you reflecting on Christ? Do you have your reflections turned on?” I want this to become part of your thinking.

Just as the core of your body is the center of power when exercising, so is grace the center of power in your cycles of growth when answering a challenge God has set for the healing of the soul.

Let’s look at a few more interesting facts about the core to take this even further: The core is the foundation of your body; it provides a stable platform for your arms and legs to function. The core is made of a group of muscles (including the abdominal muscles) that are responsible for your movements, balance, correct posture, and proper alignment of the body. When the core is strong this ensures proper movement through an exercise. When your core is strong, your body is strong!

A weak core spells trouble for the performance of an athlete because he is not able to keep his form through an exercise and does not receive the full benefit of the exercise and may even injure himself.

Let’s take a look at this in the spiritual realm of God’s kingdom. God’s perspective is that we are in warfare. Our minds belong to Him. God’s perspective is that faith must be in honor to Him, not in honor to the flesh. This being true, the flesh doesn’t have the right to have the first response. If you allow the flesh to have the first response, you’re working from a weak core and you’ll compromise the results you’re looking for. Your range of motion is going to be hindered

as you feel that pull back to the emotions, back to the questions, back to the areas of injury rather than trust in the wisdom of God.

When you keep your core (reflections) turned on, you're turning your reflections away from yourself. Your focus is not on, "What's up with me or those around me". You're not placing a burden upon yourself to fix yourself. You're allowing God to do the work as you focus on the operation of God in grace.

Now, when I say that you're not placing a burden upon yourself to fix yourself, and that you're allowing God to do the work, I am not suggesting that you're not responsible to the 5 steps. Don't allow your mind to see this as an out, as a justification to excuse yourself from the process.

Once you made the 5-Step process to overcome yourself, the world, and the devil part of your armour, you'll understand why the process is necessary to get strong. God assigned faith to go through these motions for you to stand in the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Gaining God's perspective means that we first of all believe and accept that the exercise is necessary to make us strong. By keeping your reflections turned on, you'll be keeping your core turned on so that when you perceive a challenge you'll be prepared to move through the exercise with greater motion with the grace of God rather than hindered by the flesh.

S 34) Slide 39: Step 5 – You Overcame

You overcame the deception to distrust God. You overcame the deception that building new shields will bring you satisfaction. You overcame the deception hidden in the wrong measure.

The rewards of overcoming are many: The fruit of Christ formed in the inner man, and God's healing, peace, and joy, which continue to reinforce your faith in God. You're a builder of God's kingdom. You're an overcomer in Jesus Christ. The Deceiver desires to lure you into battle each day to strengthen the bond you once shared with him, but you chose to strengthen the bond you have with God by staying active in your priesthood, by honoring God with the charity of Jesus' altar. The battle belongs to God.

“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.” (2 Corinthians 2:14)

Closing Remarks

The detailed strategy of the 5 steps allows you to build your trust and confidence in God because it makes the mind step out of the emotions of the challenge (which is a barrier to grace) and work only with His knowledge. This breaks the spell of false knowledge and the hold Satan had on the imagination.

Upon entering into covenant with God, you made a vow of faith, “My heart belongs to God.” And each day you renew that vow at the altar of Christ, “My heart belongs to God and this day belongs to God.”

The good fight of faith is fought every day on the battlefield of faith as we push back the army of darkness that threatens to steal our faith and hope in God. Satan tried to trick his way back into your heart, but your heart belongs to God. This you prove each day as your choices of faith are made and the sword of truth is drawn.

The battle belongs to God as long as you fight the fight of faith carrying the banner of Christ, which displays the colors of His righteousness, His sanctification, His justification. All 12 Elements of the Gospel are the performance of your faith. It is Christ that purifies the soul. It is Christ that cleanses the conscience. It is Christ that gives the insight of grace to know who we are in Him. He is life Itself. Where He leads, we will follow.

Jesus’ promises are renewed to you each day. He says, “I will become your weapon.” The choice of faith is ours to make each day. Bow before charity to gain the life of Christ. So true are the words of Apostle Paul who wrote:

Romans 8:32-37

³² He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

³³ Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

³⁴ Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

³⁶ As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

³⁷ Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Closing Prayer

When I consider the detailed design of your plan for the testing and reward of faith I am wonderstruck by your unfathomable love and power to keep me united to you in faith by joining my faith to the sanctified tools of Christ.

O Lord, you’ve sworn your love for me and sealed it in your blood. You are my weapon. By you, charity breaks the bond I once shared with Satan. By you, faith forges the sword of truth from the metal of your kingdom to bring to ruin the principalities and powers of this world that once had power over me. By you, grace tames my beastly nature. By you, the priesthood is my sanctuary. By you, I see the light in the darkness.

When I am in despair, remind me of your love. You have shown me over and over again that I can trust you, that your reward follows my obedience and that your wisdom is the light of my understanding. I ask for your help. Guide my reflections that I may be strong in your testimony.

Additional Exercise

In the space below, take some headings from your reading(s) and make up some questions that you find the answers to as you read:

1. _____

Question: _____

Question: _____

Question: _____

2. _____

Question: _____

Question: _____

Question: _____

3. _____

Question: _____

Question: _____

Question: _____