

# Discipleship Foundations

## L-5 Our Greatest Needs

**Instructions:** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal insights and application. Read as a group, underline, and then share what stood out to you and why.

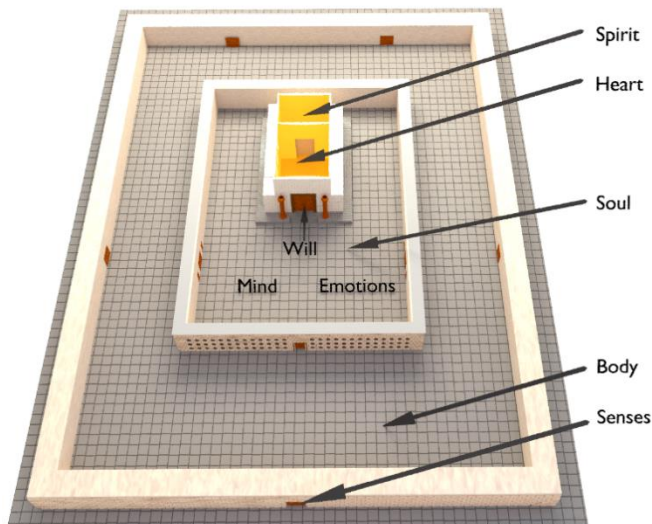
“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

Do you own a smartphone, computer, tablet, or other device? Have you experienced frustration when they just don't work correctly? I am frequently asked to fix devices when they are not functioning properly. One of the first things I do is check the connections. A smartphone, for example, can operate for a time without being plugged in or with a bad charging connection. If the power source is not properly attached, the phone will eventually stop functioning as it was designed to.

Humans are far more complicated than smartphones, but being correctly connected is still essential for us to function properly. *Relationship* is the term used for human connections. We are relational beings and are designed with three primary relational needs. If one or more of these needs are not being met, we do not function properly. Only the first will be addressed in this lesson. They are:

1. **A right relationship with God**
2. **Healthy relationships with other people**
3. **A correct relationship with ourselves**

Solomon's Temple can help us see and understand each of these relational connections in a whole new way. The diagram below shows the correlation between the temple and us.



**Developing a right relationship with God should be our greatest priority in life.** This relationship impacts the present as well as eternity. Let's consider three aspects regarding developing and maintaining a right relationship with God.

**The Need:** The more we realize the depth of our need for a relationship with God, the higher priority we will place on it. A partial acknowledgement of this need can lead to a half-hearted commitment. Just as it doesn't work in a marriage, it doesn't work with God. He wants us to be fully committed.

God designed humans to be intimately connected to Him. The Bible tells us that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit and that God's Spirit bears witness with our spirit. Within the temple, God dwelt in the Holy of Holies, which represents the human spirit. The Holy of Holies is where the Ark of the Covenant was, where the Mercy Seat was, and from where the Shekinah Glory emanated. Like the temple, the human spirit is designed to house the presence of the Lord.

God is the creator and sustainer of life and everything that exists. When He created Adam and Eve, He walked and interacted with them in the Garden of Eden. When they chose to eat the forbidden fruit something significant changed. **Do you know what it was?**

Sin corrupted the human race and separated us from a loving creator. “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 1:16-17).

The death God spoke of was twofold. Adam and Eve immediately died spiritually, and like a smartphone without a charger, physical death would inevitably come. Spiritual death includes being permanently disconnected from the source of life.

We inherited this diseased condition called *sin*. Every human, with the exception of Jesus, is born with a sin nature. This sinful condition separates us from God, and we begin the path to physical death. Our entire being suffers from the effects of sin. Our bodies are weak and diseased, our souls are corrupt, and our spirits are disconnected from God. Once we die, we face eternal separation from God.

The cost of redemption is more than we can pay. Scripture teaches us, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). It goes on to say, “For the wages of sin is death;” (Rom. 6:23a). Without a

restored relationship with God, there is no true purpose in life, and there is no hope for eternity.

We can represent this in the temple by removing the gold in the Holy Place and in the Holy of Holies. The spirit and heart don't cease to exist, but they are darkened, corrupted by sin, and disconnected from the source of life. When we receive redemption through Jesus, God gives us a new spirit and a new heart. This is the process of being born again. \*

God understood that we would be hopeless and unable to restore our relationship with Him. Because of His love for us, God came in the flesh to pay the penalty of our sin. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8, NASB). It is imperative that we understand our sin separates us from the living God who is holy and just. He must punish sin. God made a way for us to escape the grasp of sin and punishment through Jesus.

Our need goes deeper still. Escaping hell and eternal separation is huge, but so is our need for a relationship with our Creator. We are incomplete without experiencing Him daily. His life and power should be flowing to transform and restore us each continually.

**The Cost:** When we look at the cost of restoring a relationship with God, there are two areas to be considered. First, is God's cost. He came in the form of man, Jesus, to pay our penalty. This was a huge sacrifice. The God of the universe came in the flesh, was beaten, humiliated, insulted, and died for us! He had no need to do so. It was love that motivated Him. Jesus laid down His life, so we could have a new life.

The second thing to be considered is what a restored relationship costs us. We must be willing to exchange our sinful life for a new life. We must be willing to become obedient to our Creator once again. This means laying down our own desires to follow Him. Some people say a short prayer, believe they are saved, and then go on with their lives, unchanged. This is not a restored relationship.

When we truly accept Jesus and have a restored relationship with God, there is an overpowering, transforming Spirit that comes in and compels us to change. We were not created to sin, but to be conformed to the image of Christ. \*\*

Accepting Jesus is an easy thing to do if your heart's desire is to have a restored relationship. However, before saying *yes* or *no*, you must consider the cost. God will change your desires and, ultimately, your whole life if you ask Him to.

**The How To:** Scripture gives us clear guidance, "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10, NASB).

Salvation comes when we believe in our heart and confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord. When salvation truly occurs, we obey His commands and follow Jesus. The following is a short prayer that you can speak out and ask God for salvation if you are ready.

Lord Jesus, I confess to You that I am a sinner in need of Your salvation. I confess with my mouth that You died for my sins and that You rose from the dead on the third day. I also confess and repent of my sin and ask You to forgive me, restoring a right relationship between us. I give You permission to come into my life and change every area that is not pleasing to You. I ask You to give me the strength and faith that I need to enter back into this relationship with You, my Heavenly Father. I thank You for Your sacrifice and ask that You help me to follow You with a pure heart. In Jesus's name, Amen.

There is nothing magical in these words. The prayer is simply an expression of a choice which must be followed with actions to ensure the relationship grows. Actions such as finding a local church or discipleship group so you can be baptized and learn how to walk with the Lord.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT GOD

God is holy and just. We welcome the mercy, grace, and love of God, but most people cringe when justice or judgement is mentioned. It is important to realize that God's attributes and character traits are in balance. God is love, but He is also just. His just nature causes Him to judge and punish sin. His love moved Him to pay the penalty through Jesus. God hates sin, and He is the righteous judge. If we desire to know the mercy, grace, and love of God, we must also accept His righteous judgement. He alone sets the standard for right and wrong. When we walk in agreement with His judgement, we develop a deeper relationship with Him.

## GOING DEEPER

Find additional resources for each lesson such as scripture references, videos, and teachings at: <https://experienceordination.org/training-courses/>

\* Eze. 11:19, 36:25-27; John 3:3-21; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15  
\*\* 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:4-6, 8:9-10, 29, 12:2; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:1-10.