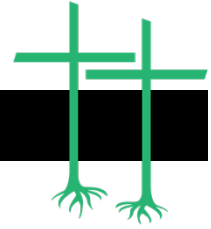


ROOTS TRANSFORMATION TEAM



How We See God

Week 4

How does our understanding of God influence our choices, emotions, and behaviors? How do family experiences influence our faith? How do the experiences of our parents and ancestors impact our lives today? What are the lessons we are supposed to learn at various stages of life but that might be stunted and still affecting us?

☐ You Were Created for Glory

- **Genesis 1:26–27** – Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”
 - 27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
- **In Genesis 3, Satan tried to convince people who were already made in the image and likeness of God that they had to do something else in their own strength to become like God.**
 - **Genesis 3:4–5** – “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman.⁵ “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
 - Accordingly, mankind became like God in the limited sense that they now understood good and evil; but in the process, shame entered their lives, and they became unlike God in their propensity toward sin.
- **The concepts of “image” and “glory” are closely linked in Scripture.**
 - “Glory” is a visual revelation of God. This is what Moses was asking for when he prayed, “Show me Your glory” (Exodus 33:18).
 - **2 Corinthians 3:18** – And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
- **Sin is the broken image of God—anything short of God’s original design.**
 - **Romans 3:23** – for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
 - Judges 20:16 uses the Hebrew word for *sin* in reference to missing a target. Sin “misses the mark” of our design.

☐ **Jesus is the solution to sin.**

- **Jesus was and is sinless, perfectly revealing the Father.**
 - **Hebrews 4:15** – For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.
 - **Hebrews 1:3** – The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being . . .
 - The NKJV says Jesus is “the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person,” speaking, of course, of the Father.
 - **John 14:9** – . . . Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. . .
- **Even though Jesus never sinned, He became sin on the cross for us, killing sin in His flesh and enabling us to live transformed lives.**
 - **2 Corinthians 5:21** – God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
 - **Romans 8:3–4** – For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh,⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
 - **1 Peter 2:24** – “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness . . .
 - **Isaiah 52:14** – Just as there were many who were appalled at him — his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness...
- **The new creation is created to be like God.**
 - **John 17:20–23** – [Jesus prayed:] My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

- **Ephesians 4:22–24** – You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds;²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
 - Notice, mind renewal is the means by which we transition from old to new. (cf. Romans 12:2.)

□ **We Become What We Behold**

- **2 Corinthians 3:7–18** – Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was,⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? ⁹ If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! ¹⁰ For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. ¹¹ And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!
¹² Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. ¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
- **The solution to sin is seeing and knowing Jesus.**
 - **1 John 3:2, 5–6** – Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. . . . ⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. ⁶ No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.
- **Right perception of God brings death to the flesh.**
 - **Exodus 33:20** – “But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”

- **The enemy fights to keep people from seeing God.**
 - **2 Corinthians 4:4–6** – The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.
 - **The devil accomplishes this by encouraging us to focus our attention on anything except the image of God—especially:**
 - Physical ailments and other earthly problems
 - Sin (our own and those of others)
 - Entanglements (unhealthy relationships)
 - Unrighteous beliefs
 - Demons and their activities
 - Old wounds (past traumas)
 - Each of these things can skew our perception of God. The more we can address in a ministry session, the more clearly someone will see.
 - As we address these issues and remove them with application of the gospel, we can perceive God more clearly, making us more like Him.
 - **God created our families for our good, but Satan often uses our family members to skew our understanding of God.**
 - Our experiences with our earthly father (or father figures) have a tendency to skew our understanding of Father God.
 - Our experiences with our earthly mother (or mother figures) tend to inform our primary understanding of “nurture” and “comfort” and “nearness.” Accordingly, they can sometimes skew our understanding of the true Comforter and Advocate, the Holy Spirit. (see John 14:16-17)
 - Our experiences with our earthly siblings or close friends can occasionally skew our perspective of the One who calls us “brothers and sisters” (Jesus). (see Hebrews 2:11; Romans 8:29; and Mark 3:34)
 - **Satan generally attacks our understanding of God at the most strategic points in our development, tempting those around us toward sin that will skew our emerging perspectives.**

❏ Understanding Human Development

○ Prenatal Issues

- The human spirit is alive and conscious of the external world, even in a baby who is still developing in the womb.
 - **Luke 1:41–45** – When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”
 - A developing child’s spirit is very much alive and can even act on his or her prophetic destiny while still in the womb, even if they might not fully understand it.
 - **Genesis 25:21–26** – Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. ²² The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, “Why is this happening to me?” So she went to inquire of the Lord.
²³ The Lord said to her,
“Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples from within you will be separated;
one people will be stronger than the other,
and the older will serve the younger.”
²⁴ When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. ²⁵ The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. ²⁶ After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau’s heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.
- It is possible for a spirit to carry sin, which means it is not necessary for the brain to have fully developed.
 - **Psalms 32:2** – Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.
 - **Psalms 51:10** – Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

- Even Christians are instructed to rid themselves of anything that might still be contaminating our human spirits.
 - **2 Corinthians 7:1** – Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.
 - Such defilement doesn't come from the outside (as though we've merely picked up a little spiritual dirt on our feet from walking in a sinful world) but rather from the sinful judgments formed on the inside of us, which are eventually expressed through our attitudes and actions.
 - **Mark 7:15** – Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them."
- Our spirit can miss the mark of God's glorious design by forming sinful judgments, even from the moment of conception, and we begin to act on this internally developed spiritual framework right from the start.
 - **Psalms 51:5** – Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.
 - **Psalms 58:3** – Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward, spreading lies.
- Secular science has found links between what happens in the world of a family while a baby is developing in utero and that baby's ability to thrive later in life.
 - See *The Secret Life of the Unborn Child* By Thomas Verny, M.D., with John Kelly.
 - "These studies concur that the baby in the womb hears, tastes, feels, and learns, and that what he thus experiences begins to shape his attitudes and expectations about himself. He can sense and react not only to large undifferentiated emotions in the mother like love and hate, but also to shaded emotions such as ambivalence and ambiguity.
"Studies reveal that a child in utero manifests tastes in music, responding calmly to composers such as Vivaldi and Mozart, but reacting with violent motions to the more pounding performances of Beethoven and to all kinds of rock music. While still in the womb, the baby learns to recognize his father's voice and to be comforted by quiet soothing tones that reassure. Within an hour and a half of delivery, the baby can pick out his father's voice and respond to it emotionally." (Sandford, John and Paula. *Growing Pains: How to Overcome Life's Earliest Experiences to Become All God Wants You to Be*. Charisma House, 2008. p.12.)

- **Some commonly observed links** (adapted from the Sandford's work and largely backed by research by Verny and others):
 - **Babies whose parents quarrel during pregnancy** tend to exhibit a disposition that is fearful, jumpy, under-sized, timid, and inordinately emotionally dependent.
 - **When a mother smokes as a baby is developing,** the baby will react even when the mother merely thinks about having a cigarette. Such babies are commonly born exhibiting signs of feeling uncertain, fearful, and anxious, not knowing how to manage stress inwardly but searching for a soothing external stimulus.
 - **When a child in the womb is not wanted,** he or she may believe the lie that they must prove themselves or deserve to live. This can lead to striving, performance orientation, and trying to earn the right to exist. He or she might have an inordinate desire to please people, or the opposite—being quick to reject others before he or she can be rejected. Such people sometimes carry a death wish and tend to struggle with frequent illnesses, problems bonding with people, and refusing affection (or having an insatiable desire for the same).
 - **Children who are conceived out of wedlock** sometimes grow up with an unexplainable sense of shame or a lack of truly belonging.
 - **When parents face a difficult financial situation** during pregnancy, the baby can sense the stress and may form a sinful judgment that "I'm a burden," perhaps feeling like the world would be better off without them.
 - Similarly, **when parents are too young or not ready to have a baby,** the little one might wrongly judge, "I'm an intrusion. I make life difficult for people."
 - **When a mother has poor health,** the child can develop a sense of guilt for existing and might take emotional responsibility for the mother.
 - **When the mother is afraid of gaining too much weight and does not eat properly during pregnancy,** the baby may develop an insatiable hunger, anger, and perhaps guilt about being a burden.

- “Surely God has healed many without looking at the past. He is not bound to any one method. We should follow the Holy Spirit’s leading and only focus on prenatal events as often and for as long as He deems that doing so is helpful. But when the Holy Spirit has led us to minister in this way, lifelong harmful ways of seeing God, others, and self have fallen from people’s eyes like scales, in miraculous ways.

“In our ministry we have observed that as a child grows, he will—unless the transforming power of the Lord intervenes—tend to interpret each succeeding experience in the light of what he has already perceived life to be and according to the way he feels about himself. His woundedness has clouded and colored his spiritual eyes. Dr. Verny’s report says that a friendly or hostile womb creates personality and character predispositions and anticipation of the outside world. The Bible says in Matthew 6:22–23, ‘The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!’

“Parents may give lavish affection to their child, and if it is received, it may be that their love may cover ‘a multitude of sins’ (1 Pet. 4:8). But to reach the root level of a person’s innermost being requires light in the person of Jesus Christ to penetrate the darkness in the heart of the one who is deeply wounded and confused; truth in the person of Jesus to counteract the lies the child has accepted about himself; the forgiveness of Jesus to cleanse, heal, and enable forgiveness in the heart of the child; and the power of Jesus to completely transform and make new.” (Sandford, John and Paula. *Growing Pains: How to Overcome Life’s Earliest Experiences to Become All God Wants You to Be*. Charisma House, 2008. p.20.)

- **Complications during birth:**

- Dr. Verny’s research identified surprising links between birth complications and later mindsets and behaviors.
 - **Breech delivery:** Higher risk of having learning problems.
 - **Unusually painful delivery:** Anger that lacks an acceptable outlet, overwhelming stress, ulcers, and depression.
 - **Cord around neck:** Throat-related problems (swallowing, speech impediments, etc.). This can contribute to antisocial or criminal behavior. A link was even found to attempted and successful suicide by strangulation.
 - **Induced labor:** An affect mother-child bonding. Can contribute to masochistic (self-harming) personality or sexual perversion.
 - **C-Section:** Inordinate craving for all kinds of physical contact, poor spacial awareness and clumsiness.

- **Erikson's stages of psychosocial development:**
 - **HOPE: trust vs. mistrust**
(oral-sensory, infancy, under 1 year)
Existential Question: Can I Trust the World?
 - **WILL: autonomy vs. shame/doubt**
(muscular-anal, toddlerhood, 1-2 years)
Existential Question: Is It Okay to Be Me?
 - **PURPOSE: initiative vs. guilt**
(locomotor-genital, early childhood, 3-6 years)
Existential Question: Is it Okay for Me to Do, Move, and Act?
 - **COMPETENCE: industry vs. inferiority**
(latency, middle childhood, 7-10 years)
Existential Question: Can I Make it in the World of People and Things?
 - **FIDELITY: identity vs. role confusion**
(adolescence, 11-19 years)
Existential Question: Who Am I and What Can I Be?
 - **LOVE: intimacy vs. isolation**
(early adulthood, 20-40 years)
Existential Question: Can I Love?
 - **CARE: generativity vs. stagnation**
(middle adulthood, 45-64 years)
Existential Question: Can I Make My Life Count?
 - **WISDOM: ego integrity vs. despair**
(late adulthood, 65 years and above)
Existential Question: Is it Okay to Have Been Me?
 - Remember the wrecking ball image (pg. 32). If a problem begins at one of these stages, it is likely to stunt other areas of development that occur at that same stage, even physically.
- **Our parents tend to have the most direct impact on how we perceive God.**
 - "People have many times come to us saying, "Don't talk to me about a loving God. Why doesn't He stop all the wars, or at least prevent some of the bestial things men do to men, sometimes in the very name of religion? Or doesn't He care?" We have all heard statements like that. Being prayer ministers, Paula and I never try to defend God. We avoid theological debates (1 Tim. 6:20). We know the answer is not a mental one but a matter of an impure heart. We merely ask, "What was your father like?" Invariably we uncover a history similar to what the person has imputed to God—cruelty, insensitivity, desertion, criticism, and so forth. No matter what the mind may learn in Sunday school of a gentle and loving God who 'so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son' (John 3:16), the heart has

been scarred and shaped by reactions to our earthly fathers. As a result, we often project cruelty, insensitivity, desertion, criticism, and other negative factors onto our understanding of who God is. Our minds may declare His goodness, but our behaviors reveal what the heart really thinks: "As [a man] thinks in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7, NKJV). Until we are able to forgive our natural fathers for the hurts they may have caused in our hearts and repent for the judgments we have formed against them, we will not be able to truly see God as gentle, kind, and lovingly present in our lives." (Sandford, John and Paula. *Transforming the Inner Man*. Charisma House, 2007. Kindle Edition. Loc.330.)

- "How many of us have come to our parents for something, and they said, 'We'll see;' and then forgot about it? Or we pleaded with Dad to come home early and take us to the movies or ball game or something, and he promised—but didn't come? Or our parents made a promise to buy us something (a bike, fishing equipment, new coat), and we waited and waited. But either it never arrived or came so late the joy of it was gone. Covertly, that colored our faith in God. What kind of anger did we push down and forget, because, 'It's not good to be angry with Dad and Mom!' What kind of resentful judgments did our hearts cherish and our minds forget?" (Sandford, John and Paula. *Transforming the Inner Man*. Charisma House, 2007. Kindle Edition. Loc.385.)

❑ Performance Orientation

- "Performance orientation is a term that refers not to the service we perform but to the false motives that impel us. Having brought performance orientation to death, we may do exactly the same works, in much the same ways, but from an entirely different intent in the heart. In bringing performance to death we are not saying to stop serving and doing, but to die to the wrong hidden motives in the heart." (Sandford, John and Paula. *Transforming the Inner Man*. Charisma House, 2007. Kindle Edition. Loc.468.)
- "Performance-oriented people require constant affirmation (unconsciously demanding it, sometimes verbally). They cannot handle criticism well. Their security is not first in God and themselves but in what people think of them. They are dependent upon the reactions of others. They have little center of decision in themselves. They must become whatever it takes to gain approval from others. They have become what Erich Fromm calls 'market-oriented

The Father was “well pleased” with His Son before Jesus had ever preached one sermon, worked one miracle, died, risen again, or done anything He came to earth to do.

God’s pleasure is not first of all based on our performance. It is first of all based on the fact that we belong to our Father.

- When we receive God's love, we receive the ability to love Him back.
 - **1 John 4:19** – We love because he first loved us.
- When we love God, Jesus gives us a clearer revelation of Himself.
 - **John 14:19–21** – Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”
- **See *handout*: The Father's Love Letter**
- **See accompanying video at *FathersLoveLetter.com***

- ❑ **MINISTRY TOOL 2:** “PSEUDO-life” (Identifying the Specific Issues)
- ❑ **MINISTRY TOOL 7:** The Father Ladder