

“REFLECTIONS OF CHRIST” LADIES RETREAT 2022

Session One

“Reflections of Christ”

James 1:22-25 “For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

1 Corinthians 15:49 “And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

Genesis 1:26-27 “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”

Genesis 9:6 “Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.”

Romans 8:29 “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

We Should Reflect Christ in _____

1 Peter 1:15-16 “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

True holiness is the pathway to fullness of life and joy. **To be holy is to be wholly satisfied with Christ.** Above all, it is to reflect the beauty and splendor of our holy Lord in this dark world. **In pursuing holiness, you will fulfill and experience all that God had in mind when He created you.** Your holiness is God’s supreme purpose for your life.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I *pray* God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”

Titus 2:11-14 “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

Romans 13:14 “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

Hebrews 12:1 “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,”

Ephesians 4:22-24 “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

True holiness comes from a relationship with God, where we develop such a love for Him that it moves us to reject all the fleeting delights that sin can offer and we are compelled to avoid anything that could cause a breach in our relationship. The Bible says that there is pleasure in sin for a season- that is relatively short. True joyous living comes from

having a standard of holiness and obedience to God. This expectation is not cold, rigid, and dutiful. It is a warm, joyous, loving response to the God who loves us and created us to enjoy intimate fellowship with Him. It is the overflow of a heart that is deeply grateful to have been redeemed by God from sin. We can't manufacture holiness by sheer grit, determination, and willpower. It is motivated and enabled by the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

Holiness and _____ are inseparable companions.

Hebrews 1:9 "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

Psalms 45:7 "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

Quote: "Surely that man must be in an unhealthy state of soul who can think of all that Jesus suffered, and yet cling to those sins for which that suffering was undergone. It was sin that wove the crown of thorns; it was sin that pierced our Lord's hands and feet and side; it was sin that brought Him to Gethsemane and Calvary, to the cross and to the grave. Cold must our hearts be if we do not hate sin and labour to get rid of it, though we may have to cut off the right hand and pluck out the right eye in doing it."

Quote: "Jesus didn't shed His blood so you and I could have a passport to happiness and heaven, while continuing to indulge in our lust, anger, and jealousy; our addictions and critical, competitive spirits; our selfishness and pride. His death provides the motivation and the power to say no to sin and yes to holiness in every area of our lives. Jesus died to make us holy, to deliver us from sin. How, then, can we carelessly or casually continue to sin against such a Savior?" Nancy DeMoss

Romans 6:6-14 "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive

unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members *as instruments* of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as instruments* of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

To see the reflection of Christ in you is what _____ need most!

Quote: “A holy life will make the deepest impression. Lighthouses blow no horns, they just shine.” D.L. Moody.

Our life can create hunger and thirst in others and the Holy Spirit can use that to draw their heart to Christ.

John 17:19 “And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”

Our sin ALWAYS affects others.

Those of us with children in the home:

Deuteronomy 12:28 “Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest *that which* is good and right in the sight of the LORD thy God.”

Proverbs 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

A call to holiness is a call to follow Christ and glorify Him. If Christ is not the central focus and we try to have a sense of morality based on our own self-effort, it will be pharisaical, self-righteousness. When we have morals or ‘good character’ to please men rather than God, it leads to bondage rather than liberty.

The word legalistic usually comes up when someone has an “extreme standard” Pastor recently taught on legalism. If you missed it, you could go back and listen... We do need to guard against making absolutes out of personal standards that are not specified in Scripture, or assuming that others are sinning if they don’t adopt our standards but why

are we so prone to defend our choices that take us right to the edge of sin and so reluctant to be “too holy?”

Romans 13:14 “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

Quote: “The one marvelous secret of a holy life lies not in imitating Jesus, but in letting the perfections of Jesus manifest themselves in mortal flesh. Sanctification is ‘Christ in you.’ ...Sanctification is not drawing from Jesus the power to be holy; it is drawing from Jesus the holiness that was manifested in Him, and He manifests it in me.”

Oswald Chambers

John 17:17 “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

Quote: “Either sin will keep you from this Book or this Book will keep you from sin.”

Psalms 119:9-11 “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

Conclusion:

God desires for our hearts to be filled with His Spirit so that we can be a clear reflection of His glory.

2 Corinthians 3:18 “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

As we allow the Holy Spirit of God to control our lives, He can make us the right reflections He has purposed for us to be.

Quote: "I do not want to be like a Paul...or any mere man. I want to be like Christ...I want to follow Him only, copy His teachings, drink in His Spirit, and place my feet in His footprints...Oh, to be more like Christ!" Adoniram Judson

Reflection Page

Questions to ask myself:

Am I getting a steady, sufficient diet of God's Word in my life?

How has the Word protected me from sin in the past month?

What Scripture have I been meditating on?

Am I getting more input from worldly sources or from the Word of God?

When was the last time I consciously confessed my sin to God? Do I have unconfessed sin that I need to deal with now?

Is there anyone I sinned against to whom I need to confess and seek forgiveness?

Is there any area of my life where I am experiencing the Holy Spirit's conviction but I have been ignoring it? Am I experiencing the chastening hand of God because of sin and I need to respond?

Decisions I made:

“REFLECTIONS OF CHRIST” LADIES RETREAT 2022

Session Two

“Reflecting Christ From the Heart”

Introduction:

Revelation 4:11 “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

We were created for God’s pleasure to please God. However, there is something we all face that seeks to be a hindrance to us pleasing Him.

1. The Flesh’s _____

Quote: “The flesh is a built-in law of failure, making it impossible for the natural man to please or serve God. It is a compulsive inner force inherited from man's fall, which expresses itself in general and specific rebellion against God and His righteousness. The flesh can never be reformed or improved. The only hope for escape from the law of the flesh is its total execution and replacement by a new life in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

-Mark Bubeck

1 Samuel 8:6-22

6 “But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.

7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

10 And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king.
11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint *them* for himself, for his chariots, and to *be* his horsemen; and *some* shall run before his chariots.
12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and *will set them* to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.
13 And he will take your daughters to *be* confectionaries, and to *be* cooks, and to *be* bakers.
14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, *even* the best of *them*, and give *them* to his servants.
15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.
16 And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put *them* to his work.
17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.
18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.
19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us;
20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.
21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD.
22 And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.”

Psalm 104:15 “And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.”

The Israelites ended up abandoning the accountability of God directly, and favored beliefs that permitted behavior and lifestyles that God forbade. Many of them became apostates as a result.

Apostasy:

1. Abandonment of one's religious faith, a political party, one's principles, or a cause.
2. An abandonment of what one has professed; a total desertion of, or departure from, one's faith, principles, or party.

3. In *theology*, a total abandonment of the Christian faith.
4. A disaffection of the heart and a disavowal of formerly held beliefs to embrace new versions of truth that enables lifestyle choices I now desire.

Apostasy envies the world. Israel wanted to be like all the nations, but they were supposed to be God's special people set apart from the world. Apostasy wants to follow the world while still identifying as God's people. It always has one eye on the world, one foot towards it, and a growing percentage of its heart in the world. They will spend a great deal of energy rationalizing their imitations of the world and degrading anyone who tries to shine a light on its true nature.

Is 53:6 "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

2. The Father's _____

2 Cor 6:14-18 "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

1 Peter 2:9-12 "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. 11 Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."

There are a few verses in the Bible that say plainly, “for this is the will of God.”

1 Thess 4:3-7 “For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: 6 That no *man* go beyond and defraud his brother in *any* matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.”

God’s will and desire is that we stay far from sin. Notice this word Sanctification, it means:

1. The act of sanctifying or making holy; in *theology*, the act of God's grace by which the affections are purified and the soul is cleansed from sin and consecrated to God.
2. The state of being sanctified, purified, or made holy; conformity of the heart and life to the will of God.

We glorify God when our plans and decisions reflect His will rather than our selfish desires.

Romans 12:1-3 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which* is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. 3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”

What a high calling it is to be a Christian! We are to live in holiness with whole-hearted obedience to God, and be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29) Notice we are also cautioned here to beware of pride! In me dwelleth no good thing but God should get all the glory for any holiness I display.

What then should our focus be?

3. The Focus of the _____

Colossians 1:13-14 “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:”

What then should our focus be as we strive to effectively fulfill our Father’s design of holiness that we may reflect Christ from the heart?

A. Guard your _____

Proverbs 4:23-26 “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.”

Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

1 Samuel 16:7 says, “But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”

The Lord is looking at our heart and what does He see?

B. Live separated from the _____

1 John 2:15-16 “Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

C. Seek God’s Will and _____

Ephesians 15-17 “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”

John 4:33 “Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”

Psalm 40:8 “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”

Are you delighted to do God’s will? Are you studying His Word so you have His Law within your heart? Doing the will of God means that we follow closely and joyfully the commandments of God. They are not grievous.

1 John 5:2-3 “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”

John 14:15 “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Reflection Page

Questions to ask myself:

Am I feeding my fleshly desires?

Reflect on the day that I trusted Jesus as my Savior and the fact that the Holy Spirit now indwells me. At the moment of salvation, I have been given a new nature. Am I relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome my old nature tendencies?

Am I diligently guarding my heart?

Am I loving the things in the world that are not holy? What influences or involvements have I allowed in my life that God has been convicting me about removing?

Do I read and meditate on God's Word daily? Am I familiar with God's clear will and His commands?

Decisions I made:

“REFLECTIONS OF CHRIST” LADIES RETREAT 2022

Session Three

“Reflecting Christ Inside and Out”

Introduction:

Genesis 1:26-27 “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man **in his own image, in the image of God** created he him; **male and female** created he them.”

Genesis 5:1-4 “This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, **in the likeness of God** made he him; **Male and female** created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat *a son* in his own likeness, **after his image**; and called his name Seth: And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat **sons and daughters**.”

We have been created to reflect God as He created us in His image, in the likeness of God. This thought is so foundational!

The world is trying so hard to get us to deny our belief in God and our acknowledgement of Him as our Creator. For decades, creation has been under attack with theories of evolution and a big bang. This is commonly taught across America as fact causing much confusion.

Jeremiah 1:5 “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”

God not only created us but He has a plan for us. Have you noticed that young people today struggle so much with direction, especially the unsaved? When they believe there is no Creator God then what purpose do they have? It is easy for them to fall into the traps

that are now being constantly pushed in society's face regarding gender. The Scriptures we read a moment ago, clearly state that God made male and female, sons and daughters. **There are two genders!** Many of us personally know someone who is claiming to be homosexual, transgender, or one of the supposed 112 genders to choose from (as of July 2022.) Only off by 110!! Gallup and Barna surveys in 2021 report that an astounding 21% of 18-24 year-olds identify as LGBTQ (compared to 7% of total population) and that each generation is twice as likely to identify as the generation before it! This is very alarming! This is a serious subject! We must be standing on a strong foundation of Truth and be sure we are teaching the next generation.

Those in my generation and older, did we ever imagine we would be seeing such a radical change in society in such a quick fashion? The first legal same-sex marriage ceremony in the United States happened on February 12, 2004 when mayor of San Francisco, Gavin Newsom ordered city hall to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. This decision resulted in the celebration of the first homosexual marriage in the United States, when Martin and Lyon got official recognition of their fifty year relationship. By 2012, Maine, Maryland, and Washington became the first states to legalize same-sex marriage through popular vote. I remember when homosexual agendas began being put to a vote in CA but same-sex marriage did not become legal in CA until 2013. In 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down all state bans on same-sex marriage, legalized it in all fifty states, and required states to honor out-of-state same-sex marriage licenses. Since this decision, there has been a very quick infiltration of indoctrinating our society and our children. How did we get here? I mentioned the attacks on the Truth of Creation already but there have been many cultural influences that have contributed to getting us where we are today.

1. Dr. John Money, a psychologist at John Hopkins in the 1950-60s, published his research and coined the terms "gender identity" and "sexual orientation."
2. The Sexual Revolution that began in the 1960s with the liberated "If it feels good, do it" mantra, and resulted the pill, legalization of abortion, the decline of biblical marriage, and destruction of traditional family model through exploding divorce rates.
3. Feminism and the natural result of it. "Feminism tried to make women equal and interchangeable with men without pondering what might happen should men want to be equal and interchangeable with women." (Abigail Dodds, "Feminism Has Consequences", 1/19/22, WORLD wng.org)
4. The internet and its immediate accessibility since the introduction of the iPhone in 2007.

5. Social activism for LGBTQ rights in politics, academics, entertainment, sports, social media.
6. Post-modernism views of relativism, radical individualism, tolerance, and humanism which claim that truth and morality are relative to culture or individual experience and are not absolute.
7. Biblical illiteracy that results in biblical concepts and the God of the Bible being foreign to our children and young people.

Ryan T. Anderson, in his book When Harry Became Sally, explains, "At the heart of the transgender movement are radical ideas about the human person—in particular, that people are what they claim to be, regardless of contrary evidence. As transgender boy is a boy, not merely a girl who identifies as a boy... people are the gender they prefer to be... What they feel is, in their mind, "who they really are" and they are only identifying with what they believe to be real. Feelings determine reality and society must affirm and adjust to their feelings. Therefore, they say it is cruel and hateful for someone to condemn them for simply being themselves, for "living their authentic life." Activists push this because they know that "an argument about transgender identities will be more persuasive if it concerns who someone is, not merely how someone identifies."

See article "When activist children disciple their parents"

We must be the louder voice and speak truth frequently and confidently to our children.

In making a decision about "Who am I?" Andrew Walker, in God and the Transgender Debate, says that it is fundamentally a "question of where we locate authority, knowledge, and trustworthiness. Who has the authority to tell me how to live, to decide what is right or wrong? Who knows what is best? Who can I trust to lead me to what will fulfill me? In our culture, the answer is 'Me! My feelings!' follow your heart."

The Bible gives a different and a better answer: It reveals to us a Creator God who has the authority to demand our obedience, the character to deserve our respect, and by His death on the cross, the proof that He loves us more than we love ourselves and wants what's best for us!

God designed us to be in an integrated body, soul, and spirit. Because of the Fall, people may have a false self-understanding about their identity, but that confusion is psychological, not physiological. Our bodies don't lie to us about who or what we are. When we distort male and female in humanity, we distort not only the image of God but

the picture of His relationship with us as expressed through the design of biblical marriage.

Matthew 19:4-6 “And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

Mark 10:6-8 “But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

Your identity as a male or female is the Creator’s decision.

Psalms 139: 13-16 “For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, *and* curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all *my members* were written, *which* in continuance were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them.”

Not only did God create us female (if you are here at this LADIES retreat) but we should be content in who He made us to be.

Romans 9:20 “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus?”

To question or to reject ‘what you were made’ at the point of your creation is to question and refuse the God who made you. The question is not how you define yourself, but how God defines you. Identity is not subjective. It is based on fact!

Be what you Are!

God intends for *what you are* (your identity) to be closely connected to *what you do* (your role). God planned distinct roles for each gender: men as leaders/providers/protectors and women as helpers/encouragers/nurturers. When you display these different roles by

your lifestyle, career, and activity choices, you are embracing the identity God had in mind for the gender you are. Biblically, what you are and what you do is further supported by how you appear. When how you appear contradicts what you are, confusion rules. God intends that you embrace your created identity by clearly displaying your distinct gender differences through your appearance—hair, clothing, voice, gestures, walk, etc.

I Corinthians 11:3-15 “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with *her* head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman *is* of the man, even so *is* the man also by the woman; but all things of God. Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering.”

The distinction of genders is an absolute that transcends time, place, and culture. In God’s order, some things pertain to men and some things pertain to women. Any behavior that blurs the natural distinction between the genders compromises God’s moral absolute.

I Corinthians 6:9-11 “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And **such were some of you:** but ye are **washed**, but ye are **sanctified**, but ye are **justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

This passage shows a list of sinful activities, but none are so egregious that they can’t be forgiven through the blood of Jesus. I like this phrase, “and such were some of you” and these 3 precious words – but ye are washed, sanctified, justified. There is no sin that cannot be overcome!

Now continuing in the Bible on this topic of gender distinction:

Deuteronomy 22:5 “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.”

Society and fads should not dictate how we dress or style our hair. The style of today is definitely blurring the lines of gender distinction which is clearly God's will from the verses we have read so far. I'm sure we have all been in a spot where we were unsure of our server or checker's gender and walked away wondering... The motivation of what we wear should be to glorify God and please Him. Some of us ladies struggle with pride in our clothing and are overly concerned about what other people will think of how we are dressed. 'We must stay on the cutting edge of fashion.' When other people's opinions control the choices we make, we are demonstrating what the Bible calls the fear of man. **Proverbs 25:29** says that “the fear of man brings a snare,” a trap. This is truly sin when we make other people the ruler of our lives instead of God. Our friends and their opinions can become an idol.

Quote: “Women who are driven by what others think of them (fear of man) may occasionally choose clothing that is a little too short, a little too clingy, or a little too low-cut in their attempts to be stylish. Or they may wear sexy clothing because that's how they want to be perceived. They like the admiration they believe they receive when they dress in a certain way. Notice the motivation. It is self-directed and prideful.”

-Michelle Brock

While we don't want to be trapped by the desire for approval, it is not completely irrelevant to care about what others think.

Romans 14:13-16 “Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way. **14** I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there* is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.**15** But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. **16** Let not then your good be evil spoken of:”

Pastor recently brought a message about this very passage and spoke about not judging in diet or days however needing to be mindful of our testimony.

Matthew 23:25-28 “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. **26** Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which* is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. **27** Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for

ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness. **28** Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.”

Just because we look the part on the outside, doesn't mean our heart is right with God. Remember, Pastor used the teacup that looked so beautiful on the outside but there was muddy, filthy water inside, that Faith, our daughter wouldn't drink? Don't be a pharisee! If you missed this message, I would encourage you to go back and listen. Again, don't fall into the trap of men's approval but seek to please God from the heart. Pastor also recently spoke on legalism. I have been told that a certain church is legalistic and one of the proofs for their theory was that all the ladies wear dresses. Now, first of all, legalism can mean they are making works part of salvation. Does this church really think ladies must wear dresses to be saved and spend eternity in Heaven? There could be a church like this out there but I know that was not the case of the church this person was telling me about. I don't know every heart in that church and can't speak for all the ladies but, there seemed to be an overwhelming sweet spirit and sincere desire to please the Lord even in their dress. Secondly, people are labeled legalists when there is an attitude that they are closer to God as a result of a certain standard or behavior. Again, I can't know these ladies' hearts but it appeared they wore dresses because of their own convictions. We need to be very careful about labeling people as a pharisee or legalistic. These are two ditches we need to personally stay away from. We also can't assume others' motives for the way they dress. It is possible for a lady to wear modest dresses as a norm and have the right motive and spirit. It is possible she is not looking down on others who dress differently than her and she is not doing it because she has been oppressed.

Romans 14:18-19 “For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. **19** Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”

We must be aware of how our dress influences others and the way they think about God. The difference between the fear of man and a godly awareness of others is our motivation. Ungodly fear of man seeks to please self. A godly consideration of others seeks to please God and build up other believers.

Would someone be able to tell that I am a Christian by how I dress? What does my wardrobe reveal about my worldview? What is the message of my image? Is Christ the Lord of my closet?

Quote: “If you are guilted into living a certain way, you start being a people pleaser. Pleasing Jesus and bringing glory to God is to be the object of our actions.”

God works in different ways and at different times for each of us. I recognize that modesty isn't always easily defined and God will help each of us develop a standard of modesty as we seek His leading on it.

Quote: “Too many Christians have standards predicated upon what a respected pastor told them years ago. They have never engrafted truth and set their own standards because they know the Word of God and believe it. Nobody lives someone else's standards for a lifetime.” -Clint Caviness

Our dress standard is an area that often gets put “off limits.” Many Christian ladies let Him into their heart to give them salvation and a home in Heaven but won't let Him into their closet. We must let God into every area of our life and recognize that He cares about this aspect too.

Quote: “As we prayerfully expose ourselves to the Scriptures, we begin to understand what God's will is regarding our conduct and character. And then as the Holy Spirit applies His word to specific areas of our lives, and as we are obedient to His promptings, we begin to develop Bible-based convictions. Our values begin to change so that God's standard becomes our delight and our desire.” -Jerry Bridges

Here are a few quick passages and thoughts that helped me develop a conviction for what I should wear:

Deuteronomy 22:5 “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.”

1 Timothy 2:9-10 “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.”

Quote: “Modesty is an attitude of humility that seeks to please God rather than man or self. It is characterized by restraint and self-control, and dignity in dress, speech, and actions.” -Michelle Brock

I Corinthians 6:19-20 “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?* For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”

I determined from Scripture that I must look unquestionably modest and feminine. Everything I wear must glorify God. I also realized that God refers to the thigh as nakedness so this helped me develop my “line” of modesty:

Exodus 28:42 “And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach.”

Isaiah 47:2-3 “Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet *thee as a man.*”

Man’s concept of modesty and God’s concept of modesty have differed from the beginning!

Genesis 3:7,21 “And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves **aprons**.
21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make **coats** of skins, and **clothed them.**”

Quote: “Adam and Eve’s idea of modesty was aprons. Notice God replaced their aprons with coats, “and clothed them” –leaving us to deduce that God did not see them as “clothed” properly as they were. Seems like mankind has been trying to get its aprons back ever since!” -Jerry Ross

There was a study done of 20-30 year old males regarding women’s dress. They perceived cleavage to be a sign of insecurity. One man commented on his survey that the more skin a woman shows, the more insecure they are. Again, what is our motivation for what we wear?

CNN published an article about rules for how women dress in the workplace. “Get noticed for your great work, not your tight pants, overdone makeup, short skirt or cleavage-revealing shirt.”

“Nothing undermines how you are perceived in business as leaving nothing to the imagination,” says Chris Hauri, founder of Mirror Image, a Chicago-based image and identity consultancy.

Leggings/yoga pants have become most popular but they leave nothing to the imagination as they show every curve.

Many non-Christian companies have modesty policies because they recognize the distraction it causes if they don't. These policies include knee length skirts, no low-cut tops, or midriff. Why do we as Christians not think of the distraction it could cause in church or out in our community when we attract attention to our bodies? God created men with a natural attraction to a woman's body. Within marriage, it is completely healthy. Should men have discipline in their thought life? Yes! Are men responsible for where their eyes land? Yes! We read in the Bible a few minutes ago about not being a stumbling block. Do you think the way we dress could be a stumbling block to a man? Most definitely! Do you think we are pleasing God and reflecting Christ in our appearance if this is the case? However, do you know that we don't need to dress frumpy or in plain, shapeless clothing to be spiritual? We should actually wear nice, stylish, clothing to reflect the beauty of Christ.

I know this is not a favorite topic but it is a Biblical one and an area that we need to do some self evaluation to be sure what our motivation is for the way we dress, be sure it is pleasing to the Lord, and be sure we are reflecting Christ to the world.

We've seen that God made male and female. We have different God given roles, different appearances but what about this idea of equality?

God's perspective: Equality

Embracing your identity does not mean accepting either an inferior or a superior position.

Often Christians have swallowed such lines as, “girls can play sports as good as boys,” thus making boys the standard for girls. Where is that in the Bible? I know we have fun competitions with boys against girls and we tease about who is better but it is never to be a serious competition. That kind of thinking is absolutely contrary to Scripture.

God's creation of mankind is that male and female are created different, yet equal in three aspects:

Male and female equally were made in the image of God. They each have intellect and the capacity to feel, reason, and communicate. (Genesis 1:27 “So God

created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”)

Male and female are equal in relationship to God. They each have the personal privilege to be saved and to know Him, and they each have personal responsibility to obey Him. (**Galatians 3:28** “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”)

Male and female are equal in relation to God’s purpose. The different male/female roles do not make either less or more than the other. These masculine and feminine roles were not generated by society, but by God. Together, they contribute to His specific purpose and plan for His creation.

God’s protection: Morality

Embracing your identity will also mean submitting to the moral boundaries of what you are. If you can trust God for what you are, then you can trust His guidelines for *protecting* what you are.

What are God’s moral boundaries?

First, all homosexual activity is forbidden.

God’s original design at creation was male for the female and female for the male. Homosexual acts cannot and do not fulfil God’s command for mankind to “be fruitful and multiply”—that is, to produce children. Neither do they fulfill the natural family dynamic—dad, mom, children—that is clearly outlined in Scripture.

Beyond His plain design at creation, we find God’s repeated commandments against homosexuality (sodomy) in both the Old and New Testaments. (Genesis 18:20, Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:13, I Kings 14:24, Romans 1:18-32, I Corinthians 6:9-10, I Timothy 1:8-10, Jude 7) The practice of homosexual behavior is an abomination to God and will bring about His judgment and punishment.

Second, all sexual acts outside of marriage are forbidden.

God’s creative intent generally was for the male/female relationship, but more specifically it was for the husband/wife relationship. Adam and Eve weren’t just

the first male and female; they were the first husband and wife! It was not good that man was alone so God created Eve to be his wife. **Genesis 2:24-25**

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” **Ephesians 5:31** “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.”

Intimacy is reserved for marriage—between one man and one woman.

I Corinthians 7:1-2 “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.”

Hebrews 13:4 “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”

Outside of marriage, a physical relationship between a man and a woman (fornication) is a dangerous sin against God. (Exodus 20:14, Leviticus 18:20, Deuteronomy 22:22-24, Proverbs 6:32-33, I Corinthians 6:18-20, Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 5:3, Colossians 3:5, I Thessalonians 4:3)

Sexual immorality damages your conscience, scars your reputation, and damages your body.

As you can see, submitting to God’s moral boundaries strengthens your identity as either male or female. It also protects you, allowing you to mature in that God-given identity.

God’s passion: His glory

Embracing your identity means trusting God as your Creator and Guide for this life.

No matter how you feel about what you are, or what someone has suggested to you about your identity, you can trust a loving God. He is good and righteous, and He knows what is best for you. He made you what you are for a reason. That ultimate reason is His glory. We glorify God when our thinking and behavior put God’s wonderful character and works on display for all to see.

In John 9:1-3, we read the story of a man who was born blind. That was his condition at birth. The reason for his being born blind didn’t have anything to do

with him or his parents. His blindness was part of God's plan to show that Jesus was God by performing a miracle that no one could deny.

Now, hopefully, you don't see your gender as a handicap or a mistake! God wants you to live as He made you, trusting Him entirely with His choice, so that His unique position as Creator can be seen and praised.

You are what you are so that God can show His works through you and be glorified.

Conclusion

So, what are you? Embrace that identity by accurately reflecting what you are. Strengthen and protect that identity by living a pure life. Glorify God by trusting that His way is right and He has your best interest in mind.

Reflection Page

Questions to ask myself:

As the world wrestles with questions of gender, God has already provided the answers in His Word. The psalmist said in Psalm 119:30, "I have chosen the way of truth." Have I determined the same? Am I searching and relying on the Scriptures for absolute Truth?

Have I surrendered my life to the truths of God's Word? Am I developing standards in my life based on Scripture principles not for men's approval?

Am I contently living within the roles that God has created for me?

What is my motivation for the way I dress? Does my wardrobe please the Lord? Am I careful not to cause a brother to stumble by what I wear?

Am I living within God's standards of moral purity?

Decisions I made:

“REFLECTIONS OF CHRIST” LADIES RETREAT 2022

Session Four

“Reflecting Christ Leads to Action”

Introduction:

There are a few characteristics of Christ that we should implement into our lives that will be a true reflection of Christ.

1. Love As I have _____

John 15:12 “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.”

John 13:34-35 “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

What love is and isn't:

The world's definition of love from a modern dictionary:

1. A strong feeling of affection and concern toward another person, as that arising from kinship or close friendship.
2. A strong feeling of affection and concern for another person accompanied by sexual attraction.
3. A feeling of devotion or adoration toward God or a god.

True love is not just a feeling but an action. The Bible defines love much differently than the world.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 “Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the

truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8
Charity never faileth:"

If we are to mirror Christ-like love, let's look at the way He loves us.

A. Jesus's love is _____

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Romans 5:7-8 "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Matthew 5:43-45 "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"

It is natural to love them that love us, but it is supernatural to love them that hate us.

B. Jesus's love is _____

Romans 8:38-39 "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Quote: "There is nothing you can do to make God love you more! There is nothing you can do to make God love you less! His love is Unconditional, Impartial, Everlasting, Infinite, Perfect!" Richard C. Halverson.

Mark 12:30-31 "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

Another aspect of our life that we should reflect Christ in is:

2. Be a Humble _____

John 13:14-15 “If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.”

Loving service combats a self-focused life. When we serve someone, we get our eyes off ourselves and onto another.

Galatians 2:21 “For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.”

Philippians 2:3-8 “*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*”

Galatians 6:3 “For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.”

Quote: “Do not desire to be the principal man in the church. Be lowly. Be humble. The best man in the church is the man who is willing to be a doormat for all to wipe their boots on, the brother who does not mind what happens to him at all, so long as God is glorified.”
-C.H. Spurgeon

Romans 6:16-18 “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

Who are you reflecting? Who are you serving?

Quote: “Just two choices on the shelf, pleasing God or pleasing self.”

Ephesians 2:8-10 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

3. Be a _____

1 John 1:5 “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

John 8:12 “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

2 Corinthians 6:14 “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”

Matthew 5:14 “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.”

This verse shows how Christians are on display to the world. We cannot avoid being watched and evaluated by those unsaved people around us. What they think about us does matter.

1 Samuel 16:7b “for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”

We have spent some time this weekend talking about our heart because that is what God sees and we have also talked about our appearance because that is what man sees. Both are important!

Romans 14:7, 16-19 “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”

These verses in Romans show that we are responsible for what we communicate to other believers, even if we don't intend to communicate those things. We also learn from these verses that good intentions don't erase our responsibility for how we are perceived. It's not that what people think is completely irrelevant. The apostle Paul tells us not to let our good be evil spoken of. The Roman Christians were selfishly defending their rights without any concern at all for how their actions were being perceived by other believers. We must be aware of what others think and how it influences the way they think about God. The difference between the fear of man and a godly awareness of others is our motivation. Ungodly fear of man seeks to please self. A godly consideration of others seeks to please God, build up other believers, and be a godly testimony to the unsaved.

A Commentary on this passage of Romans said, "To do what conscience allows is not always right and to do what it questions is always wrong. The strong Christian should not be contemptuous toward the opinion of a weaker brother on a doubtful question, nor should the weaker man be critical toward the stronger because of what conscience allows him. Both have a right to opinion and both are responsible to God for it."

God is not impressed with external religion. It must be genuinely from the heart. Our relationship with Christ will naturally produce fruit as we spend time reading the Scriptures and not just reading them but studying them. Look for attributes of God as you do and seek to be Christ like.

Luke 6:46 "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

Just as we would not look in the mirror in the morning and do nothing about what we see, don't be guilty of looking in the "mirror" of God's Word and not applying it. Over the past 2 days we have searched the Scriptures and seen many Bible truths. Will you go your way and forget what manner of women you were, OR will you continue in the Word, being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work in order to be blessed indeed?

Reflection Page

Questions to ask myself:

Do I display Christ-like love? Is there someone I struggle to love? What can I do to help my attitude toward them and display God's love to this person?

After reading 1 Corinthians 13 today, what attribute(s) of charity do I need to work on?

Am I focused on myself too much? Do I have a genuine care for others?

Who could I humbly serve and how?

Am I a light in this dark world? Are there things in my life that are causing my light to be hidden or dimmed... and if so, what?

Am I willing to make changes in my life to better reflect Christ? In what ways?

Decisions I made: