

# Core Attitudes of the BSM:

## What does the mission and vision of the BSM look like when lived out?

“Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind...**Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus**” Philippians 2:2,5

“Do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewal of your mind**, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:2

Know Him	Make Him Known
Eternity Matters Most	Ambassadors of Reconciliation
Not Perfect but Perfectible	I Am Not My Own
Pursuit of Excellence	Telling the Next Generation
The Word is Fuel	Heart for the Nations
Matthew 18 (M18)	Every Week is First Week

## KNOW HIM: Attitude One

### Eternity Matters Most

**Every person is eternal and without a reconciled relationship to their God through Jesus, will spend eternity in hell. My eternity mattered so much to God that He sacrificed His Son, Jesus, to pay the price for my sin. Now that I have this eternity, the eternity of my friends and family matters most to me. Therefore, I believe that getting every sinner like me connected to his or her needed and perfect Savior is my highest and holiest priority.**

*“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.” – John 3:36*

*“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” – Acts 4:12*

*“But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith – that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.” – Philippians 3:7-11*

#### Discussion Questions:

1. Is everyone totally sinful? Why is your view of the sinfulness of man important?  
*Man is totally sinful in the fact that all of his person is marred by sin. This includes the mind (Eph. 4:18), the will (Rom. 6:16-17), the emotions (Titus 3:3), and the physical body (Rom. 8:10).<sup>1</sup>*
2. On a campus like UNT, students are constantly bombarded with messages of unity, the need of tolerance and the denouncing of God. It's not uncommon for a follower of Christ to be told while sitting in class that they are ignorant for believing in Jesus (more specifically, that He is the only way to God).
  - a. How do we, as followers of Jesus, respond to this?
  - b. How does this campus culture impact your personal ministry and the ministry of the BSM?
3. The three verses above explain 3 parts of salvation. What do they tell us?
  - a. Who receives it?
  - b. Who offers it?
  - c. What is the response that must come once salvation has been given?
4. If eternity matters most, why are we so lazy and intimidated to share the Gospel and its impact on our lives?
5. How do as leaders we make “Eternity Matters Most” an actual expressive and displayed part of our faith?
6. If eternity matters most, what does that say about our other wants or desires in life? What should be our primary concern in decision-making?

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<sup>1</sup> The Village Church, Covenant Membership Class material, page 34

## KNOW HIM: Attitude Two

### Not Perfect but Perfectible

**I have never “arrived” as a follower of Jesus. There are always more ways that the Holy Spirit is transforming me by degrees into the image of Christ, maturing me, stretching me and growing me. I will not pretend to be perfect, but be authentic with my imperfection, knowing that God is already at work in renewing me. I am humbly and persistently pursuing this sanctification through Gospel-centered discipline and community, knowing that it comes as a worshipful response to my salvation, not a means to it. I am also encouraging others to do the same.**

*“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” – 2 Corinthians 3:18*

*“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own.” – Philippians 3:12*

*“For this is the will of God, your sanctification.” – 1 Thessalonians 4:3a*

*“Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God.” – Hebrews 6:1*

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What is sanctification?

*The work of the Holy Spirit in our lives that makes us more like Christ. The Holy Spirit seeks to produce His fruit in us as our minds are renewed and we are conformed to the image of Christ. Though sin remains a reality, as we are led by the Spirit, we grow in the knowledge of the Lord, and are called to display His work in our lives that all people may see our good works and glorify our God. All believers are called to persevere in the faith through spiritual disciplines (Bible study, prayer, worship, confession).<sup>2</sup>*

2. Why is community an integral part of sanctification?

*In Christianity, a “community” is to be a like-minded and unified group of redeemed people who authentically share their lives with each other, so that, together they may grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ resulting in a deeper love for God, the Church, and the world.<sup>3</sup>*

3. Read Acts 2:42-47 and Hebrews 10:24-25. What can we learn from these examples of community?
4. Why are honesty, humility and vulnerability essential in expressing how God is sanctifying you as you share the Gospel with others? (*Vulnerability, see Eph. 4:25; Humility, see Phil. 2:1-11; Honesty, see Galatians 6:2*).
5. Why are we so afraid to be open and honest about the sin in our lives? What does this reveal about our true belief in the Gospel?

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<sup>2</sup> The Village Church, Covenant Membership Class Material, page 22

<sup>3</sup> The Village Church, Covenant Membership Class Material, page 4

## KNOW HIM: Attitude Three

### Pursuit of Excellence

**God takes very seriously the idea that everything we do must be done with a skillful hand, with complete devotion and most excellently as is possible. We will commit to pursuing every area of our life with the utmost excellence, whether it's our schoolwork, our relationships with friends, and the functions of the ministries we are serving in.**

*"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ." – Colossians 3:23-24*

*"With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand." – Psalm 78:72*

*"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness." – Romans 12:6-8*

*"Whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies – in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." – 1 Peter 4:11*

#### Discussion Questions:

1. How do you define excellence?  
*The quality of being excellent (being very good of its kind) and superior (of higher rank and quality).*
2. Your generation, more so than any in history, has been told, "you can do whatever you want, be whoever you want to be." You've been told that you're always good enough (this can be seen in every participant in competitions receiving a trophy). Your parents have tried to protect you from the world instead of prepare you for it. How do these principles influence your ability to focus on others and to strive for excellence in what you do?
3. Read Colossians 3:23-24. What does this actually look like when practiced? If a "Pursuit of Excellence" became part of your daily life (in school, work, ministry, etc), what would change?
4. Is it possible for you to be good at anything and everything? What does Romans 12:6-8 teach us? How would your life be different if you focused on how God has gifted you instead of what others believe you should be? Is it hard for you to not compare yourself with others (their gifting)?
5. What would a "Pursuit of Excellence" look like within the different areas of your ministry at the BSM?
6. Pastor Tullian Tchividjian said, "The Gospel frees you from needing anything so that you can spend your life giving everything." What are the things in your life that you think you need that get in the way of your pursuit of the Gospel?

## KNOW HIM: Attitude Four

### The Word is Fuel

**As the inspired and revealed Word of God, the Scriptures are where we return continually to seek guidance, find encouragement, be corrected and most importantly grow in our wisdom of our own salvation—we must learn to preach the Gospel to ourselves first. The study and application of the Bible is a critical part of the life of a disciple, as is private meditation and meeting corporately to grow in the word together. But all of this is not an end to itself, we are not merely consumers of The Word, but rather it is a fuel for us as we go out on our mission in the ministry of reconciliation to give God all the glory.**

*“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” – 2 Timothy 3:16-17*

*“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” – Hebrews 4:12-13*

*“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” – Hebrews 10:24-25*

*“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” – 2 Peter 1:21*

*“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Good News.” – Romans 10:13-15*

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What do 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Hebrews 4:12-13 teach us about the Bible?  
*Given by God, is profitable for sanctification through teaching, correcting, training, equips followers for good work, it changes our hearts and our lives (living and active)*
2. The Barna Research Group did a survey and found out the following:
  - a. Fewer than ½ of all adults can name the four Gospels
  - b. Many professing Christians cannot identify more than two or three of the disciples
  - c. 60% of Americans cannot name five of the Ten Commandments
  - d. 82% of Americans believe “God helps those who help themselves” is a Bible verse
  - e. A survey of graduating high school seniors revealed that over 50% thought that Sodom and Gomorra were husband and wifeWhat do these stats teach us about America, a “Christian” country?
3. Why do you think your generation chooses to not read and study the Scriptures?
4. Why is it important for followers of Christ to meet together corporately to study the Bible?
5. What does Romans 10:13-15 teach us? If we aren’t in the Word of God, how do we know what to preach?
6. If the students in our BSM were serious about studying God’s Word, how would that impact individual lives, the BSM and our campus? How is The Word fuel?

## KNOW HIM: Attitude Five

### Matthew 18 (M18)

**The ministry of reconciliation applies to the way we relate within the Church as well as with those outside it. We do not settle disputes or conflicts like the fallen world around us. We do not gossip or go behind someone's back to build a case against him or her. Matthew 18 clearly spells out how Christians are called to solve disputes and clarify misperceptions. We are also called to speak only words that build up, especially of those who are not present to defend themselves. There are no exceptions.**

*"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."* – Matthew 18:15-20

*"So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places."* – Ephesians 3:10

*"Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."* – Ephesians 4:29

*"They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips."* – Romans 1:29

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does Matthew 18:15-20 teach about resolving conflict?
2. Why is it so hard for us to put Matthew 18 into practice?
3. How can you use conflict as an opportunity to build up other believers?
4. How should Ephesians 4:29 impact the way you handle conflict?
5. Why is it important for followers of Christ to display Matthew 18 for non-believers?
6. If Matthew 18 became the culture around the BSM, what would that look like?

## MAKE HIM KNOWN: Attitude Six

### Ambassadors of Reconciliation

**God's plan of reconciling me to Himself through the cross of Jesus is only one part of the story. I have now been entrusted with a ministry of reconciliation, carrying out God's work of restoring EVERYTHING to everything else. This includes relationships between family and friends, the right stewardship of our planet, working for justice and peace, and most of all appealing to others that they be reconciled to God.**

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." – 2 Corinthians 5:17-20*

*"For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him." – Colossians 1:19-22*

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." – Matthew 28:19-20*

*"And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news." – Romans 10:15*

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What is the job of an ambassador?  
*An authorized representative or messenger.<sup>4</sup> A follower of Christ has become an authorized Gospel representative to the world.*
2. What does Colossians 1:19-22 teach us about being reconciled to God through Christ Jesus?
3. 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 says that those who have been reconciled to God (followers of Christ) have been entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation. How does this translate into being an ambassador for Christ?
4. Matthew 28:19-20 (The Great Commission) is the job description of an "Ambassador of Reconciliation." What is our job description?
5. What are practical ways that you are an "Ambassador of Reconciliation"? How can you become a better ambassador?
6. In what ways can the BSM be known as being "Ambassadors of Reconciliation?"

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ambassador>

## MAKE HIM KNOWN: Attitude Seven

### I Am Not My Own

**Because my eternal salvation and joy is secure, I no longer live for myself but only for what is in the best interest of others, especially those who do not know Jesus. Every decision I make, whether in my personal life or my priorities in ministry, is through the lens of how it will be perceived by those who do not yet know Jesus. How will a “lost sheep” hear this lesson I’m teaching? How will a sojourner respond to our decision to hold this event at a certain time or place? Will a not-yet-Christian know the meaning of the words I’m using?**

*“For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.” – Romans 14:7-9*

*“For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.” – 1 Corinthians 9:19*

*“And he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” – 2 Corinthians 5:15*

*“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?” – Luke 15:4*

#### Discussion Questions:

1. The idea of “I Am Not My Own” goes against everything around us. Culture tells us that it’s all about us and what we want. The American dream. How do we rewire our hearts and our minds to understand that once we are in Christ, nothing is about us anymore?
2. How do you balance having freedom in Christ with being a servant to all (1 Corinthians 9:19)?
3. What does Romans 14:7-9 teach us about our lives?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. This passage tells us that since we have been bought with a price we are not our own anymore. Verse 12 says that while all things are lawful (permissible) for me, not all things are helpful (or beneficial). What does this mean? How does it impact your life and ministry?
5. How is Luke 15:4 lived out within BSM ministry?  
*There is an extreme focus on an individual. Making sure they fit in, feel welcome and know that they are wanted. If every person who came into the BSM felt like they were wanted, how could that change the culture of the BSM?*
6. What are some practical ways that you can apply this attitude to your life? To your involvement at the BSM?

For further discussion on this Attitude, see You Are Not Your Own – The Pursuit of Righteousness at the end of this handout.



## MAKE HIM KNOWN: Attitude Eight

### Telling the Next Generation

**God has always emphasized the telling of His story to the next generation of His people. In the same way, Jesus' model for ministry was one where one Spiritual generation of believers was crucial in the formation of the next. We are committed to the idea that as soon as we become disciples we are responsible for making more disciples.**

*"Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children – how on the day that you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, the Lord said to me, 'Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.'" – Deuteronomy 4:9-10*

*"So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come." – Psalm 71:18*

*All of Psalm 78*

*"But we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will give thanks to you forever; from generation to generation we will recount your praise." – Psalm 79:13*

*"And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." – Matthew 28:18-20*

Discussion Questions:

1. This attitude focuses on two spiritual disciplines: discipleship and evangelism, you can't have one without the other. Why is telling God's story (and how it has impacted your life) to the next generation an important aspect of discipleship and evangelism?
2. Read Psalm 78. What do we learn about the nation of Israel? Why do they keep returning to sin? Why are they told to constantly speak of what God has done in their lives? What does this chapter teach us about ourselves?
3. Telling God's story requires us to be available and willing to use words. Why is this so intimidating?
4. How do you preach the Gospel to yourself?  
*If you don't remember your need for it everyday, you won't share it with others.*
5. How can the leaders and members of the BSM tell God's story continuously? What are ways that we can practically make this happen?

## MAKE HIM KNOWN: Attitude Nine Heart for the Nations

**God's plan is not for one people group or tribe, but that all nations would be grafted into a new kingdom in Christ. We will be obedient to Christ's commands to go out and be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. We will also take advantage of every opportunity when the people from the ends of the earth come to us.**

*"And in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice." – Genesis 22:18*

*"Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they say among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad." – Psalm 126:2-3*

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." – Matthew 28:19-20*

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." - Acts 1:8*

### Discussion Questions:

1. God has literally brought the nations to UNT. Every state and over 124 countries are represented on our campus. During your time at UNT, how does being an "Ambassador of Reconciliation" impact your "Heart for the Nations?"
2. How does Psalm 126:2-3 impact how you view sharing the Gospel? Does sharing how the Gospel has impacted your life bring shouts of joy and make you glad?
3. How does knowing that God is with you always (Matthew 28:20) encourage you in regards to evangelism?
4. What does Acts 1:8 teach us about how the Holy Spirit is involved in the spreading of the Gospel?
5. Going and telling (Matthew 28:19-20) is not an option, it is a command. This command is not meant to be burdensome, but to be an opportunity for followers of Christ to be encouraged by watching God work in and through them. Why is it so hard to be obedient to our calling of evangelism?

## MAKE HIM KNOWN: Attitude Ten

### Every Week is First Week

**Jesus' ministry was not exclusive but inclusive. Anyone who met Jesus experienced a welcoming love and graceful acceptance no matter who they were. We will strive to create a culture of invitation that makes everyone feel welcome and loved, and this posture will continue year-round, not just during the first few weeks of school. We will not exclude anyone from joining us in the most joyful or fulfilling community we have to offer for any reason, be it their past mistakes, their current worldview or simply the fact that we don't know them as well as our closer friends.**

*"Who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." – 1 Timothy 2:4*

*"As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him. And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." – Matthew 9:9-13*

*"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me." – Mark 9:37*

*"And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh." – Jude 22-23*

*"But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect." – 1 Peter 3:15*

#### Discussion Questions:

1. This attitude is one of the first ones we forget. As the semester progresses, we get busy, distracted and comfortable. Why is it important for our BSM leaders and participants to remember, "Every Week is First Week?"
2. What are practical ways for this attitude to infiltrate our lives and BSM ministries?
3. What does Matthew 9:9-13 teach us about the ministry of Jesus? What principles can we apply to our lives?  
*Jesus was available to anyone and everyone. He didn't just spend time with the people who were like him or easy to be around.*
4. Jude 22-23 says to have mercy on those who doubt. How hard is it for you to be patient and kind to people who want to argue and be belligerent to your faith?
5. When someone walks into the BSM, what do you think they experience? What is their first impression? How can we continue to improve their first experiences?
6. Are you always prepared to share what you believe and why you believe it (1 Peter 3:15)? What would help you be more prepared to share the Gospel in any situation and circumstance?

## You Are Not Your Own – The Pursuit of Righteousness

*“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. 13 “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” 17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” – 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 (ESV)*

There are 2 main Biblical truths found in this passage of Scripture: **“All things are lawful for me – but not all things are helpful” (v. 12)** and **“Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit” (v. 19a)**. But you can’t just start with trying to apply these Biblical truths to your life without first recognizing what verses 19 & 20 teach. There we read, **“You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”**

### Christ is Lord AND Savior

We are the Lord’s, both by creation and redemption. Jesus loved us and bore our sins on His body on the cross, therefore we no longer think of our lives as our own. When you submit your life to Jesus as Savior (one who brings salvation)... you must submit yourself to Him as Lord (ultimate authority). You cannot have Jesus as a Savior without Him being your Lord. The two cannot be separated.

### Our lives are not our own

We fight long and hard to have the rights we think we deserve. We want our way. We don’t like being told what we can or cannot do. This reveals the true nature of our sinful hearts. We care more about ourselves than we do about CHRIST IN US. Because of the saving grace of Jesus, my life is no longer my own, so I am no longer able to live only thinking about what I want. The life of a believer must display the Gospel and its continual sanctification (the process of becoming more like Christ). In our greatest moments, we boast Christ. In our weaknesses, we boast Christ because our insufficiencies are hidden in the sacrifice of Jesus (through repentance, asking forgiveness, humility, etc.). (See Ephesians 2:8-10).

### Sanctification is a process

The amazing thing about the Gospel is GRACE. We will never be perfect (Philippians 3:12-16). We will fail every day. But the grace of Jesus covers our failures and reminds us of our constant need of Jesus. If we only focus on “behaving” instead of obediently submitting to Christ, legalism and pride take the place of our efforts for sanctification. Sanctification is a progressive journey that lasts a lifetime. There is no place for guilt and shame for those who are in Christ... instead there is repentance and the opportunity to run to Jesus. Our natural tendency is to run to legalism because it is a tangible way to “save ourselves,” but that would nullify (void) the cross.

### For the sake of the Gospel

Verse 12 says, **“All things are lawful for me – but not all things are helpful.”** While there might be certain things that would be permissible for me to do, that doesn’t mean it would be beneficial for me to do them. In other words, while an actual action might not be sinful, yet if someone saw me doing it and then stumbled by my action, there is an element of accountability that must be recognized (read 1 Corinthians 9:19-27 for more explanation). We must consider others in our decisions and actions for the sake of the Gospel.

### Before you act, think.

Verse 12 continues with **“I will not be mastered by anything.”** When we are mastered by something it means that it controls us – this is called habitual sin. (i.e an addiction). Some examples of this are addictions to: pornography, alcohol, cigarettes, etc.). When we sin, we choose to submit to something other than God’s desire for us. Sin is choosing to find fulfillment in something other than Christ. Habitual sin and addictions stem from us trying to find fulfillment in things that will not satisfy us. Food itself isn’t sinful, gluttony is (Prov. 23:20-21, Gal. 5:16-26, 1 Cor. 10:31). Sex itself isn’t sinful, sex outside of marriage is. Alcohol itself is not sinful, drunkenness is (Eph. 5:8, Rom. 13:13, Luke 21:34, 1 Cor. 6:10, Gal. 5:21, 1 Tim. 3:3). For example, alcohol in moderation (when you are of legal age) is

completely permissible. What must then be considered is... is it beneficial? We must ask ourselves, will my having an alcoholic beverage (even in moderation – in this circumstance / situation) cause another to stumble or damage my ability to share the Gospel? Before you act, think about the possibility of your actions causing guilt, shame or regret.

### **Glorify God with your body.**

Verse 19 says, ***“Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.”*** It is not up to us to take our bodies and use them the way we desire. We must use our bodies to glorify God, the One to whom it belongs. This Biblical truth points to discipline and obedience. It’s about so much more than alcohol, cigarettes, etc. Here are some areas that must be considered:

- How is your thought life? What would your thoughts display about your heart if they were projected for everyone to see? What do the words you speak reveal about your heart?
- Are you getting the rest you need on a regular basis? Are you eating healthy food? Are you exercising?
- Are you maintaining sexual purity?

Every structure, our bodies included, has to be maintained to sustain and fulfill the purpose it has been created for. Are you obediently maintaining your body (and ultimately your life) in a way that glorifies the Lord and displays the Gospel to others?

### **The Gospel**

We consider all of this because after all, isn’t it ALL ABOUT THE GOSPEL?!

***“For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” – 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 (ESV)***

### **We have been bought with a price**

2 Corinthians 5:14-21 tells us that because Christ has reconciled us to Himself (through His death and resurrection); we then become ambassadors of the Gospel. His followers have been given the Ministry of Reconciliation. We are to display the Gospel to the world through submitting our lives to Christ daily. A follower of Jesus no longer has the right to say, “This is my life.” We have been bought with a price, reconciled to God through Jesus, and have been given the responsibility of displaying/proclaiming the Gospel to the world.

It’s not about what I want. It’s about what Christ would have me do.

Does your life / actions / words portray that a progressive sanctification is happening in you? Does your discipline / daily decisions display that you submit to a Lord and Savior?

These Biblical truths are not just for Christian leaders, they are every follower of Christ. Will you count the cost of being a disciple of Christ? Is He worth it to you?