

Christian Ambassador Training

Our Sovereign – Week 3

^{ESV} **2 Corinthians 5:17-21** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

[Prayer]

We are ambassadors *for Christ*. In the first week we talked about essentials for an ambassador: and those were...? Knowledge, Wisdom, and Character

Clint kicked off the knowledge section of the course talking about *how* God has revealed Himself to us. Who can recall the two categories of revelation?

- Nature/Creation: General Revelation Romans 1:18:19

^{ESV} **Romans 1:18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

- The *Living* (John 1:1-3:14) and *Written* (2 Tim 3:16-17) Word: Special Revelation

^{ESV} **John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ... ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

^{ESV} **2 Timothy 3:16** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

As ambassadors for Christ, we represent our sovereign, Jesus, to the world. It is important to know some things about your sovereign. We are going to focus on three very broad areas, each of which we will only scratch the surface.

- Who is Jesus?
- What is His Will?
- What is His Message?

Tell me about Jesus – Exercise (get a list then go back and “what do you mean by...?”)

Nature	Attributes
<i>“What” is He?</i>	<i>What is He like?</i>
<p>God - <i>Are you sure? (exercise)</i> <i>“Jesus never claimed to be God”</i> <i>“... council of Nicea ...”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - John 1:1-3;14 - Col 1:19 - John 8:58 (sample <i>I am</i> of John) - John 20:28 - Mark 2:1-12 - Mark 2:28 <p>Man (<i>what kind of man?</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prophet - Priest - King <p>Lord (Phil 2:9-11; James 2:1)</p> <p>Savior (characterize ... <i>perfect</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - John 6:37 <i>“all that the Father gives me...”</i> - Rom 8:29-30 - <i>“Golden Chain ...”</i> - John 10:29 - <i>“no one is able to snatch”</i> 	<p>Holy - (<i>winner! – give away...</i>)</p> <p>The biblical word for holy has two distinct meanings. The primary meaning is “apartness” or “otherness.” When we say that God is holy , we call attention to the profound difference between Him and all creatures. It refers to God’s transcendent majesty, His august superiority, by virtue of which He is worth of our honor reverence, adoration, and worship. He is “other” or different from us in His glory... The secondary meaning of holy refers to God’s pure and righteous actions...”¹</p> <p>Repetition for emphasis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Truly, truly I say...” (25 X in John)--Jesus</i> - <i>Funny (Gen 14:10) fell in to the “pit pits”</i> - <i>Not Funny (Rev 8:13) “woe woe woe”</i> - <i>“Holy holy holy” (Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8)</i> <p>Love (<i>characterize ... warm feelings?</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Psalm 103:11 - <i>“God is love” (2X in 1 John 4)</i> - John 3:16 - John 14:15 - <i>“If you love me...”</i>

¹ Sproul, R.C., *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith*, Tyndale House, 1992, p. 47.

<p>King (characterize a king...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Unquestioned authority</i> <p>Judge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2 Tim 4:1 <p>Friend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – John 15:13-15 <p>Example (<i>yes and no</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Are we all called to die for the sins of others? Forgive sins? Speak with the authority of God? Judge? Claim to be the only way?...</i> 	<p>Fruits of the Spirit</p> <p>ESV Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “nice”? (WDYMB) <i>Was Jesus always nice? “You brood of vipers...”</i> <p>Sovereign</p> <p><i>Two warnings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>A difficult/unsettling attribute</i> – <i>we don’t have time to go in depth on this</i> <p><i>Remember: This is an Ambassador class – you need to be able to speak intelligently to these issues.</i></p> <p>God, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.²</p> <p><i>How sovereign is God?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Over the hairs of your head or sparrows that fall?</i> – <i>Over Kings and Kingdoms?</i> – <i>Actions of His people and those of His enemies? (Gen 50:20; Acts 4:28)</i> – <i>Election/Predestination*?</i>
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Because election and predestination are taught clearly and repeatedly in Scripture, we embrace and teach it here at DSC, but we also embrace just as tightly the responsibility of man. Two doctrines difficult to reconcile, but both clearly taught³.

² *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Committee for Christian Education & Publication, Presbyterian Church in America, 1990), chap. 5. sec. 1.

³ *Predestination/Election – see Eph 1:5; 1:11; Rom 8:29-30; 9:6-24*
Responsibility of Man – Matt 25:32-45; 1 Cor 6:9-10

Paul so recognized the struggle that we have with this doctrine that in his letter to the Romans, he made a point of anticipating and answering the very same objections we tend to throw out (see Romans 3:5; 6:1; 6:15; 9:14; **9:19**). Finally he rebukes his objectors for daring to judge God according to their own standards (see Romans 9:20ff⁴).

I. His Identity

A. Jesus is not ...

- 1.... Jenny Craig (not here to help you “become a better you”)
2. ... your “home boy” Yes, there is a relationship, no, it is not a relationship of equals!
3. ... a *liar* or a *lunatic* (*Trilemma*)

B. Jesus is ... (see the list we worked through on the board)

II. His Will

As we represent Jesus Christ our Sovereign, it is important that we understand what his will is.

A. Is the Father’s will

^{ESV} **John 6:38** For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.

^{ESV} **John 5:30** "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

B. The Father’s will... is not lost! (*so quit looking for it*)

C. The Father’s will ...is that you *be saved*.

^{ESV} **2 Peter 3:9** The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

^{ESV} **1 Samuel 2:25** If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death.

Saved? -- From What?

⁴ Paul was dealing with two difficult doctrines here: 1) God’s sovereignty in election; and 2) God’s inclusion of the Gentiles while exercising His sovereignty. Both were difficult for Jewish Christians to accept.

- Sin? ... No, sin is fun... next?
- Consequences of Sin? ... if I steal, I get stuff; if I fornicate, I have fun... are you advocating “safe sex” to keep from STDs?
- Myself? No, I’m as narcissistic as the next guy... anyone else?
- God... are you saying *saved from God*? ...Exactly!

^{ESV} **Romans 5:9** ... be saved ... from the wrath of God. (*ellipses filled in later!*)

^{ESV} **Luke 12:5** But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!

- How do (can) you know?
 - *We stand upon a promise of God.*
 - ^{ESV} **Romans 10:13** For "everyone who ***calls on the name of the Lord*** will be saved."
 - *Our salvation is a work of God, perfectly accomplished in Christ!*
 - ^{ESV} **Matthew 19:26** "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."
 - ^{ESV} **Romans 5:8** but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.
 - ^{ESV} **Romans 8:33** Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Two unhealthy extremes:

- *So caught up in self-examination and aware of sinfulness that we can doubt God's saving work (need assurance verses)*
- *A presumptuous and mis-placed confidence (need self-examination texts)*

D. The Father's will ... that you be *filled with His Spirit*.

^{ESV} **Ephesians 5:17** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

- *Power to be witnesses & resist sin*

^{ESV} **Acts 1:8** 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."

^{ESV} **Galatians 5:16** But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

^{ESV} **Romans 8:13** For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

E. The Father's will ... that you be sanctified (holy/set apart).

^{ESV} **Romans 12:2** 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.

^{ESV} **1 Thessalonians 4:3** For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;

F. The Father's will ... that you be submissive.

1. To God—obedient to the Great Commission and Great Commandment

^{ESV} **James 4:7** Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

2. To Our Elders

^{ESV} **Hebrews 13:17** Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

3. To One Another

^{ESV} **Ephesians 5:21** submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

4. To Worldly Government/Authority

^{ESV} **1 Peter 2:13** Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

G. The Father's will ... that you suffer.

^{ESV} **Philippians 1:29** For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,

^{ESV} **2 Timothy 3:12** Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

^{ESV} **1 Peter 4:19** Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

H. The Father's will ... that you be *thankful*.

^{ESV} **1 Thessalonians 5:16** Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

I. The Father's will ... that you be *wise*. (*Wisdom – Our Neglected and Despised Guide*)

^{ESV} **Ephesians 5:15** Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

Wisdom personified in Proverbs describes herself as a counselor and guide:

^{ESV} **Proverbs 1:20** Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice; ²¹ at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; ... ²⁴ Because I have called and you refused to listen, have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded, ²⁵ **because you have ignored all my counsel** and would have none of my reproof,

^{ESV} **Proverbs 8:14** I have counsel and sound wisdom; I have insight; I have strength. ¹⁵ **By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just;** ¹⁶ **by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly.** ¹⁷ I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.

Wisdom in Scripture always means knowledge of the course of action that will please God and secure life, so that the promise of James 1:5—"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him" (RSV)—**is in effect a promise of guidance**. "Let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed," counsels Paul. "Then you will be able to discern the will of God, and to know what is good, acceptable, and perfect" (Rom 12:2 NEB).⁵

Dr. J.I. Packer

[God] never calls us in the New Testament to "seek His will," but rather to seek His kingdom and do His will. *We ought to stamp out of our vocabulary the nonbiblical and misleading expression "finding God's will."*⁶ [emphasis in the original]

Dr. Bruce Waltke

I've taken a lot of time out here guys because "Decision Making and the Will of God" is an important aspect of our witness. Are we faithfully pursuing wisdom as our means

⁵ Packer, J.I., *Knowing God*, InterVarsity Press, 1993 ed. p. 232.

⁶ Walke, Bruce K., *Finding the Will of God a pagan notion?* Eerdmans, 1995, p. 15.

of making decisions, or are we a superstitious people, or worse, a people who dabbles in pagan divination? Stand to Reason includes the Decision Making material in their basic Ambassador curriculum, and for good reason.

III. His Message -- *Let's look for a common theme*

John the Baptist—pre-church, but sounds familiar

^{ESV} **Matthew 3:1** In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

^{ESV} **Acts 19:4** And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus."

Jesus' first words preached

^{ESV} **Matthew 4:17** From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Jesus to the Church in Laodicia

^{ESV} **Revelation 3:19** Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.

Jesus sends out the twelve two-by-two ...

^{ESV} **Mark 6:12** So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent.

Peter (former coward now empowered by the Holy Spirit) brings knowledge of sin then...

^{ESV} **Acts 2:38** And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Peter has a personal message for Simon the magician ...

^{ESV} **Acts 8:22** Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you.

Paul and Silas to the broken Philippian jailer who asked "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

^{ESV} **Acts 16:31** And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Paul addresses the Areopagus

^{ESV} **Acts 17:30** The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,

Paul describes his message to King Agrippa

^{ESV} **Acts 26:19** "Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰ but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.

- A. “Repent and believe” is the consistent call of Jesus and his followers.

Repentance is "to turn back" (שׁוּב *shub* in Hebrew) or "change one's mind or purpose" (μετανοε, *metanoeo* in Greek). In this context it is a radical change to the core of a person's being.

The very fact that repentance is needed indicates that there is something wrong with people. How do we lovingly and gently reveal this? – The biblical model of evangelism: law to the proud, grace to the humble.

In the same way that it is not unkind of a doctor to faithfully give a truthful diagnosis to someone who has a deadly disease, it is not unkind of us to gently diagnose a lost and dying world by the means God has provided:

^{ESV} **Romans 3:20** For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

^{ESV} **Romans 7:7** What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."

^{NASB} **Galatians 3:24** Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

- B. Believe what? – so glad you asked! We’ll spend the next couple of weeks talking about the gospel. What it is and what it isn’t.