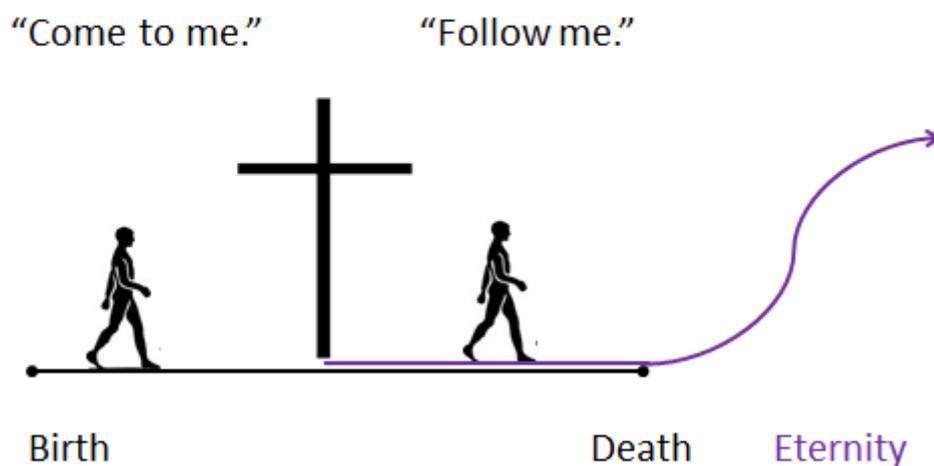


# incarnate

**verb:** to embody or represent in human form.

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.

Romans 8:28-30 (NLT)



Discipleship means becoming like Christ in:

- Our thinking
- Character
- Relationships
- Moral choices

“The point of life is learning to love – God and people.”

“The essence of love is not what we think or do for others, but how much we give of ourselves.”

*Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven Life*

We are transformed by God’s Holy Spirit, people and circumstances though:

- Truth
- Trouble
- Temptation
- Time

Workshop: Incarnating God’s word more deeply into our lives.

### 1. Sharing the changes you’ve seen in your life as a believer.

**As you look back, how has God changed you and your marriage?**

(If you’re not married focus on a relationship that’s important to you, with a family member or close friend.)

- **Describe your attitude, habit or behaviour BEFORE God influenced you** e.g. I was very selfish, putting my needs first; I was very impatient and used critical language...
- **Describe HOW the change happened** e.g. I realised I was being selfish so I prayed and asked for God’s help and He changed me from the inside out; one day ... happened and I felt so terrible I realised I had to change...
- **Describe WHAT changed** e.g. I started to love ... in a new way putting his/her needs first; I found I was less judgemental and controlling and became more patient with...
  - a. Write down some short sentences to answer the questions and be honest about any struggle. Also try to be specific and free from Christian jargon as if you were speaking to a non-believing friend.
  - b. Share your experiences around your tables.

## 2. Being Transformed by Truth

21 Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, 22 throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. 23 Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. 24 Put on your new nature, created to be like God - truly righteous and holy.

Ephesians 4:21-24 (NLT)

- RECEIVE the truth, replacing lies with truth
- READ the Bible, REFLECT and REMEMBER.
- REPENT,
- RENEW through the Holy Spirit.
- RESPOND in faith and action.

“You may be the only Bible anyone ever reads.” ANON

### Individual Exercise A

- i.** Pray to **RECEIVE God’s truth**, asking God to show you any lies you are believing and replace them with the truth.
- ii.** **READ.** Look at the Bible verses in Table A and ask God to show you if there is a truth he wants you to **INCARNATE** into your life / marriage. Is there an attitude, behaviour or habit He would like to change in you to make you more Christ-like, so that you and your marriage / other significant relationship can flourish.  
(If another Bible verse comes to mind that’s not on in the Table then use that.)
  - **REFLECT.** What does ‘my way’ look like? If you applied the truth of God’s word what would your behaviour and marriage look like?
  - **REMEMBER.** Write out the **Bible verse on a post-it** so you can put it somewhere where you’ll see it daily to help you memorise it and change your thinking.
- iii.** **REPENT in prayer**, turning from lies or ‘self’ back to God.
- iv.** **RENEW in prayer**, asking God to fill you afresh with His Holy Spirit.
- v.** **RESPOND.** Start to live out the Bible truth from now. If you fall back into old patterns then repeat steps **iii** to **v**.

### 3. Growing Through Temptation

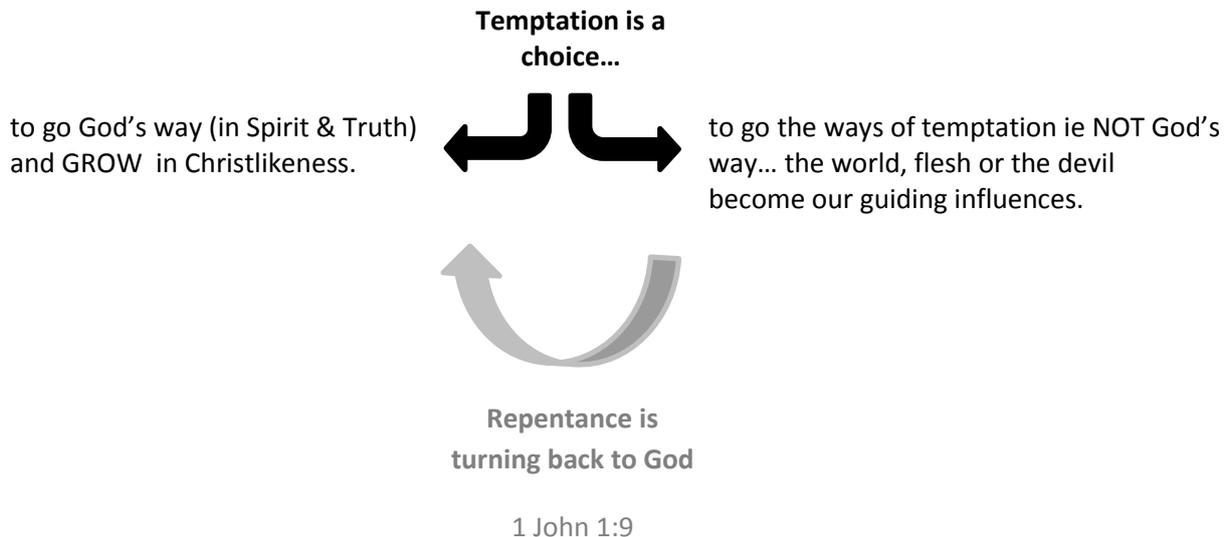
“My temptations have been my masters in divinity.” *Martin Luther*

**THE WORLD:** Giving into people pressure, “Everyone’s doing it”; appeasing others due to insecurity / fear.

**THE FLESH:** Giving into my way, my feelings, my desires, my logic, my comfort... (IF those things take us away from God and into sin.)

**THE DEVIL:** The author of lies TEMPTS US TO...

- Doubt
- Discouragement
- Disunity
- Deception



#### Individual Exercise B

**Which is my typical temptation?** Think about the Truth you want to INCARNATE into your life / marriage (Exercise A) and ask yourself what might be the temptation(s) drawing you away from living out God's truth... Prayerfully write down what comes to mind:

## The Holy Spirit helps us face temptation AND live God’s truth in our lives.

22 But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness,

23 Gentleness (meekness, humility), self-control (self-restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law [that can bring a charge].

24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus (the Messiah) have crucified the flesh (the godless human nature) with its passions and appetites and desires.

25 If we live by the [Holy] Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. [If by the Holy Spirit we have our life in God, let us go forward walking in line, our conduct controlled by the Spirit.]  
Galatians 5: 22-25 (AMP)

Fruit of the Spirit		God teaches us the most when...
<b>Love</b>	Showing affection for others.	A person is unlovely and we don’t feel very loving towards him or her.
<b>Joy</b>	Exuberance for life.	In the midst of sorrow.
<b>Peace</b>	Serenity.	There is chaos and confusion; plans are going ‘wrong’!
<b>Patience</b>	Even temper. Forbearance.	We have to, or, are forced to wait.
<b>Kindness</b>	Sense of compassion in the heart so we do good for others.	We need to show compassion when we don’t feel they deserve it.
<b>Goodness</b>	A conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people.	We are tempted to think someone is of little value, worthless even.
<b>Faithfulness</b>	Loyal commitments.	We are tempted to give up on someone.
<b>Gentleness</b>	Meekness and humility. Not needing to force our way in life.	We are tempted to ‘force’ OUR way
<b>Self-control</b>	Self-restraint; marshalling and directing our energies wisely.	We are tempted to drift and give into our selfish or lustful desires.

### Individual Exercise C

Which one (or two) fruit of the Spirit do you most want God to grow in your life right now to help you INCARNATE Christlikeness into your life / marriage? Think in terms of what will help you establish the Biblical Truth (Exercise A) and grow through the Temptation (Exercise B).

**Write down the fruit here...**

**Write a short prayer on a post-it to help you remember...**

#### 4. Discussion & prayer around tables

- a. What new ideas have you gained – “AHA” moments – that will help you grow in Christlikeness?
- b. Pray for one-another (in pairs) to GROW IN CHRISTLIKENESS in your lives / marriages, including:
  - God to use TRUTH (in Word and Spirit) to transform you.
  - Help you grow through TEMPTATION.
  - For God to use TROUBLE to refine you.
  - So that your life / marriage may flourish, glorify God and point others to Him.

#### 5. Helping hand for our growth

Interview with Sally Gorton.

**Notes:**

For ACTION at home:

**Memorise your Bible TRUTH and pray daily that God will INCARNATE His TRUTH into your life and grow FRUIT in the power of the Holy Spirit.** We suggest you put your Post-it's with the Bible TRUTH (Ex A) and prayer for FRUIT (Ex C) somewhere you will see them every day for a month (bathroom mirror, bedside table, Bible, Journal...?)

**Also pray daily:**

- That God will use any TEMPTATION (Ex B) or TROUBLE to grow you in Christlikeness through the power of the Holy Spirit and in Jesus Name.
- For opportunities to share what God has done in your life with non-believers to witness the difference God makes in your life and relationships.

Further Reading:

**The Purpose Driven Life, Rick Warren. Zondervan.**

*International bestseller and rightly so. An opportunity for a 40 day journey to explore your life purpose in Christ. It's a rich spiritual marathon and one you might like to do with a prayer partner. It may take more than 40 days!*

**Emotionally Healthy Spirituality, Peter Scazzerro. Thomas Nelson.**

*An excellent resource to help you understand and bring emotional health into your walk with Christ. Reading this book together opened up many deep conversations for us and in fact we are still talking about it and dipping into the wisdom. Highly recommended.*