

- I. ONE THING—The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

II. MEDITATION

- A. Review your class notes from Tuesday.

- Take some time to think about the main ideas of the lesson. Find the audio message on our website under the Resources tab. (www.DivineDesignDiscipleship.com).
- Which of the scriptures referenced were particularly meaningful to you? Write out those verses below and spend some time studying them this week.

- B. Rewrite your One Thing into a prayer, expressing your heart's desire for God to make this truth become your experience.

III. SING

Singing is helpful in connecting emotionally to the truth.

Listen to the songs from this week's playlist to aid you in taking today's principles from your head to your heart.

This playlist and our master playlist for the Expectations series can be found on our Divine Design Discipleship YouTube channel. (Be sure to subscribe to our channel!) Our 2020 playlist is also available on Spotify. See the handout provided with your notebook for instructions on how to access these resources.

IV. PRINCIPLES

These principles will help you recognize and develop biblical expectations:

A. TRAINED EXPECTATIONS

- Because expectations impact every one of our relationships, it's essential that our expectations of others contain love at their core: Jn 13:34 NLT-- I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.
- St. Paul applies this mandate to love in his letters to believers: Gal 5:14 NLT-- For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."
- In Ephesians, Paul offers instructions on loving in such a way that helps us manage our expectations and keep our relationships healthy: Eph 4:1-3, 15-18, 23-27, 29 NLT-- Lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. ² Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. ³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace...Speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. ¹⁶ He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. ¹⁷ With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. ¹⁸ Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him...Let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. ²⁴ Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. ²⁵ So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. ²⁶ And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ for anger gives a foothold to the devil...Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.
- These guidelines will help us stay in alignment with God's call to love, unity and harmony in our relationships. Our expectations of other people need to be:
 1. Attainable
 - God is asking us to cultivate hearts of humility, patience, and acceptance toward one another. This enables us to formulate relational expectations that are attainable. (4:1-3)
 - Consider the difficulty and frequency of expectations so that they are reasonable, fair, biblical, and take into account all that is being asked of this person.
 - Expectations must be realistic for the circumstances surrounding them. They should be doable in light of the other party's maturity, preferences, gift mix, and skill sets.
 - What we desire from the other person needs to be something we would be willing to do ourselves if we were in the other person's position.
 - Remembering the type of relationship (closest, close, casual, clashing) will aid you in setting expectations that are appropriate.
 2. Explainable
 - Relational expectations are especially difficult because we are often unaware of them, their roots, and how to accurately communicate them to the other person.
 - God calls us to go beyond what's natural or comfortable in formulating and expressing our expectations to those with whom we share a relationship. (4:15-18)
 - Once we are able to recognize and name what we expect, we are reluctant to actually ask for what we want or need. We want the benefits without the cost involved.

- “Someone has concluded that 80 % of our expectations are assumed – never really expressed. Consider for a moment one of your relationships. How many expectations have you actually expressed and discussed? You see – most are assumed.” (Bill McRae)
 - It’s overwhelming to unload all our expectations at once! Let’s verbalize our desires in one particular area that currently needs attention. Get that one worked out before adding on.
3. Negotiable
- Think of setting relational expectations as a negotiation process. Both parties need to feel heard, understood, and that their viewpoint has been given the appropriate weight.
 - Both people need the opportunity to ask questions and offer objections. There must be the freedom to set boundaries that are biblically sound for the various roles in that relationship.
 - Instead of criticizing the other person’s ideas or actions, it’s better to put the focus on what we want or need. (Ex: I would love more time with you vs. you never have time for me.)
 - The negotiation isn’t complete until there is harmony and love and agreement. (4:23-29)
 - Remember that there are some expectations that are non-negotiable. It is important to consider that for each type relationship. (Ex: honesty, safety, and fidelity in marriage).
- Insights:

B. STRAINED EXPECTATIONS

- After doing the work of identifying, communicating, and negotiating our expectations topic by topic over time, the relationship will inevitably encounter change! ☺
- When change comes, it will often require us to “make allowances for one another.” (Eph 4:2) Even happy change can be stressful and impact what we can expect.
- Unless we are proactive to anticipate and address the new demands on each party, change is an opportunity for unmet expectations, personal pain, and relational strain.
- Often we see the evidence and effects of unmet expectations in our emotions first:
 - When our expectations are unmet, the emotions we are most likely to experience are anger, resentment, sadness, rejection, or feeling unappreciated.
 - If we are the ones that fail to live up to an expectation, we often feel shame, defeat, unworthiness, anxiety, and fear of criticism or conflict.
- Our passage tells us to deal quickly with any relational stress. (Eph 4:27-28) Avoiding the problem is not the same thing as tolerance or peacekeeping!
- Jesus tells us that the first priority in dealing with our stress and negative emotions is to bring them to Him: Mt 6:33 AMP-- First *and* most importantly seek (aim at, strive after) His kingdom and His righteousness [His way of doing and being right—the attitude and character of God], and all these things will be given to you also.
- As we sit at Jesus’ feet, He will give us the insight needed to deal with our own issues and with the tension in the relationship: Eph 1:16-17 JBP-- Since, then, I heard of this faith of yours in the Lord Jesus and the practical way in which you are expressing it towards fellow-Christians, I thank God continually for you and I never give up praying for

you; and this is my prayer. That God, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ and the all-glorious Father, will give you spiritual wisdom and the insight to know more of him.

- Depending on the nature of the relationship, God may allow us to simply forgive and adjust, resolving the problem without involving the other person directly: Eph 4:31-32 AMP-- Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor [perpetual animosity, resentment, strife, fault-finding] and slander be put away from you, along with every kind of malice [all spitefulness, verbal abuse, malevolence]. ³² Be kind *and* helpful to one another, tender-hearted [compassionate, understanding], forgiving one another [readily and freely], just as God in Christ also forgave you.
- In our more intimate relationships, a conversation is most often the appropriate course of action. This size and frequency of the issue are factors here.
- “Speaking our feelings and fears requires a willingness to be vulnerable...Vulnerability is courageous. It’s a willingness to drop your shield and expose the unguarded underbelly of your fears, doubts, and insecurities” (Kyle Benson)
- How the other individual responds when we communicate our unmet expectations, is informative about their willingness and capacity for greater intimacy: 2 Cor 6:13 JBP-- Oh, our dear friends in Corinth, we are hiding nothing from you and our hearts are absolutely open to you. Any stiffness between us must be on your side, for we assure you there is none on ours. Do reward me...with the same complete candor!
- When the Corinthians didn’t rise to the invitation of deeper intimacy, Paul continued to risk in vulnerability and love. He didn’t demand but left the door open for more.
- Insights:

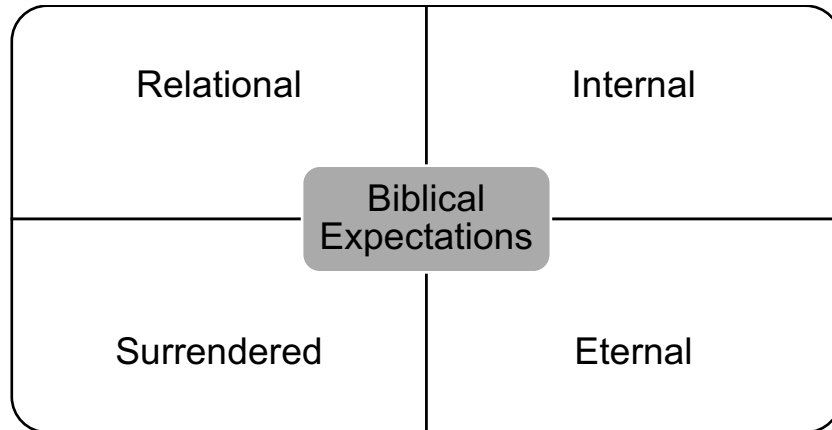
C. MAINTAINING EXPECTATIONS

- Sometimes we find ourselves in relationships where we have encountered a long string of unmet relationships and our efforts to resolve the issue haven’t worked.
- We find ourselves wondering what’s next in the relationship. Options include:
 1. Renegotiating Expectations
 - This course can be appropriate for any type of relationship. Most often it is used with those people where we have a God-given call or a large/long-standing investment.
 - Address the specific issue vs. bringing the whole relationship to the table.
 2. Apologize and Try Harder
 - For most Christians, this is the fastest route out of conflict. It’s great to admit you were wrong, but only if the underlying reasons for the relational strain have been addressed.
 - This approach is often a setup for a vicious cycle: disappointment → apology → try harder. Weariness, disillusionment, and erosion of the relationship can result.
 3. Settle for Less
 - One or both parties may find themselves unwilling to take action or responsibility for resolving problems in the relationship. They bring less and expect less at this point.
 - We settle when we never really take the time and effort needed to understand the other person and their perspectives about the issues between us.

- Know that some problems in the relationship will never be fully fixed. Instead, we can ask and expect God give us love, understanding, and acceptance in these areas.
- The best approach is to negotiate and negotiate again until unity and harmony are restored. This plan is the most costly but also the most beneficial!
- Maintaining expectations through ongoing negotiation beautifully reflects one of Paul's overarching relationship principles: Eph 5:21 NLT-- Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.
- The verb "submit" in Greek is *hypotassō*. The standard Greek-English lexicon renders submit as "voluntary yielding in love."
- We can express love and humility in the relationship by prayerfully considering if there is a deeper issue involved. Ask the Lord to show you any of these roots:
 - The Lord is doing internal work through this relationship: Pr 27:17-- As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.
 - One (or both) of you is trying to recreate or resolve something from the past: Lam 3:20 NAS-- Surely my soul remembers and is bowed down within me.
 - There's false hope that this person is your source of happiness or a desired future: Jonah 2:8 NIV— Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them
 - Instead of unconditional love, the relationship has a debt/debtor basis (you should, you are supposed to, you owe me): Rom 13:8 AMP-- Owe nothing to anyone except to love *and* seek the best for one another; for he who [unselfishly] loves his neighbor has fulfilled the [essence of the] law [relating to one's fellowman].
 - Judging emotions, conflict, vulnerability, or relational work as "bad" or unnecessary: Rom 14:13 MSG-- Forget about deciding what's right for each other. Here's what you need to be concerned about: that you don't get in the way of someone else, making life more difficult than it already is. I'm convinced—Jesus convinced me!—that everything as it is in itself is holy. We, of course, by the way we treat it or talk about it, can contaminate it.
- As each individual grows in health and purity of heart, no doubt the relationship will begin to grow and be more richly satisfying to both people.
- Phil 2:3-5 JBP-- Now if your experience of Christ's encouragement and love means anything to you, if you have known something of the fellowship of his Spirit, and all that it means in kindness and deep sympathy, do make my best hope for you come true! Live together in harmony, live together in love, as though you had only one mind and one spirit between you. Never act from motives of rivalry or personal vanity, but in humility think more of each other than you do of yourselves. None of you should think only of his own affairs, but should learn to see things from other people's point of view.
- Insights:

II. CONTINUE TO PRACTICE

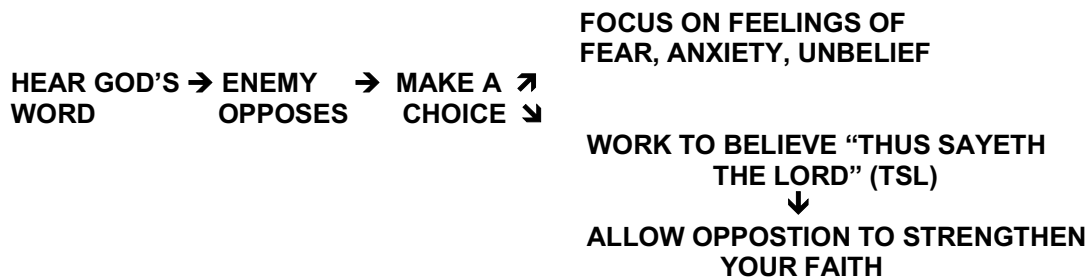
- Study “Tools & Techniques: Supplication” to help you develop a robust prayer life.
- Use the handout “Tools & Techniques: Be Renewed” to recalibrate your expectations.
- Refer to “Tools & Techniques: Listening to God” to help you grow in intimacy in your relationship with the Lord and find biblical guidance for this important practice.
- The whole truth about any topic or situation is multifaceted. We must ask the Holy Spirit to bring understanding about all the elements and to aid us in balancing them:



- With these mindsets as our starting point, we can expect to R.I.S.E. above our circumstances as we deeply know the truth and are set free:

R.	I.	S.	E.
Relational	Internal	Surrendered	Eternal

- Pay attention to what God *is doing* while you are waiting on Him to do the thing you want most. Praise Him for the promises He has given and don't forget to ask for patience!
- When we feel empty and unsatisfied, it's time to check in on our deepest core needs. *What other source are we expecting to fill those needs? Where are we relationally with the Lord?*
- Be honest with God. Journal about your feelings with “Tools & Techniques: I Feel But God Says.” Then search out Scriptures that offer you accurate expectations instead.
- Refer to this continuum to help you make a choice whenever storms threaten your peace:



- Use the handout “Tools & Techniques: Spiritual Blessings” to help you connect to the wonderful things you can expect from God as He does His internal work in you.
- Developing a relational mindset could be depicted this way:

EXTEND FAITH INCREMENTALLY → **GOD PROVES TRUSTWORTHY** → **DEVELOP CONFIDENT & ACCURATE EXPECTATIONS IN GOD**