



Welcome to Spiritual Formation in Community

*“Learning to live my life the way
Jesus would live my life if he were me.”*

Check-In



Describe your emotional weather...
(stormy, cloudy, calm, sunny)

***and one real life story of receiving
information from God that helped
you, and how it came to you.***

Musings on Hearing God



We may **struggle** with hearing his voice because **we limit our efforts** to hear to only when we are **in trouble**, and not as a **regular course and pattern of our life.**

If our **goal** is to **abuse or misuse** the **voice or message of God**, then he may **choose not to speak to us.**

Musings on Hearing God



There is **no scripted perfect will of God** for every **individual person** in every **situation**; it is not necessary to approach hearing from God as needing to hear that **one perfect and infallible detail** or you risk **missing the plan or purpose of God**.

God has a **perfect will**, but it is not a **finite set of actions**, and sometimes God's will is that **we figure it out on our own**. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Musings on Hearing God



Many people who will **fail at hearing and following God** will fail because they just **cannot stay focused on life in the Kingdom**. For them the **kingdom of the world** will be the **primary context** of life because it is the one that is **visible and around which life revolves**. This is where **spiritual disciplines** can help us by **creating a context** for hearing God.

However, **Christian spirituality** is not found in people who **outwardly practice a set of spiritual activities**, but those who **draw their life from practicing a daily personal, dynamic, interactive and conversational relationship with God**.

Musings on Hearing God



God is **actively** in many ways, trying to **teach us about himself**.

Our **pre-existing ideas and assumptions** are what actually **determine** what we can **see, hear, or otherwise observe**.

What we **know and believe** about God must **grow** so that we have an **adequate context** by which we **make sense** of what **God is saying** to us. (Proverbs 2:1-6)

Table Exercise



What would you say to a person who objects to the idea that God wants a conversational relationship with us?

- 1. God would not communicate with human beings**
- 2. God does not communicate with human beings**
- 3. God cannot communicate with human beings**
- 4. God should not communicate with human beings**



God Would Communicate

God is not like the influential and powerful dignitaries of today who are limited by physical barriers, ego, consciousness, capacity to pay attention, and will power to stay focused.

Human greatness is thought to almost require having nothing to do with ordinary people.

The humanly unimportant ones are most important to God.

Matthew 19:14

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God Does Communicate

The fact that we do not hear from God does not mean he is not speaking to us

Psalm 19:1-4; Mark 4:23-24

We might not be in a good place to hear a message from God

- Are we ready to change our plans if he asks it?
- Do we want to know what is unhealthy about our choices?
- Do we simply want to be rescued according to our desires?
- God is always working a plan for our good, but we don't always want what is good
- To what use would I put a message from God?

From Dallas Willard...

"Hearing from God is a reliable, day to day reality for people with good sense; it is for those who are devoted to the glory of God and the advancement of his Kingdom. It is for the disciple of Jesus who has no higher preference than to be like him."

Isaiah 59:1-fff; John 10:22-27

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God Can Communicate

The war between science and theology

- the university system of higher education is the unquestioned source of knowledge

In our current culture, **communication is almost completely physical**

- We use phones, radio waves, electronic impulses and devices that interpret them
- We assume all communication must be in this way; therefore, God is limited by us to communicate in ways we understand
- We must open our minds beyond the university system of a reality without a non-physical being, and accept a truth we see in scripture that the academic world has yet to endorse
- There is a non-physical reality operating in this world, and we are part of that reality

The edge of the known universe

46-47 billion light years away

If God is out there... that far off... how will we ever reach him or hear from him?

He is not only out there... he is right here, and he is not bound by physical realities, ***and neither are we!***



God Can Communicate

Miracle - a surprising and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific means and beyond the capability of human beings; manipulation of the physical by non-physical means.

- **Body** - healing eyes, ears, legs, skin disease, internal blood issues, and resuscitation
- **Food prep** for thousands with enough for 1-2 people
- **Nature** - wind, waves, sun & sky, trees & shrubs, and animals
- **Delivered by** gestures, words, and thoughts up close and from a distance for one or thousands at a time

Why wouldn't a God who was fully capable of doing these things be able to cause us to hear Him if that is what he wanted to do?



God Can Communicate

Room enough for Science and God

There is **no reason** in the **established truths of science** to suppose that **God cannot exist**, or that he **cannot reach us** and be **with us** in order to **guide** and **communicate** with us.

If you really do **believe** that the **idea of hearing from God** is **unscientific** in the world in which you live, you are going to have **great difficulty** in being **open** to it, and certainly **practicing** it.

To the **degree** you come to **see all of reality permeated** through and through **by God**, you will begin to **open yourself up** to the **possibility** of **receiving a communication** from him.

Genesis 28:16-17; 2 Kings 6:11-17
Acts 17:24-31

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God Should Communicate

Those who believe God should NOT communicate with **everyday common people** often base this belief on the **chaos** it might cause in the church if everyone had a "**Word from God**"

Living Stones

1 Peter 2:4-5 - coming to the Living Stone, you like living stones are being built into a spiritual house - you are "little Christs" who are led by Christ

Shepherds vs Sheepdogs

John 10:1-16 - Sheepdogs drive sheep while Shepherds lead and sheep follow

A Good Rule of Thumb

If you believe God has told you to do something, ask Him to confirm it with you three times: through His **Word**, through **circumstances**, and through **someone with no knowledge of the situation**

God desires a relationship with us that is **personal, dynamic, interactive** and **conversational**

- **Research a working definition** of each of those four characteristics
- Think of **a few people** in your life with whom you **have all four characteristics**
- What is **different** about **those relationships** than all others you may have?

An underwater photograph showing several divers in a blue, slightly hazy environment. The divers are silhouetted against the light, and their fins are visible. The word "Homework" is overlaid in a large, white, serif font across the center of the image.

Homework

Does He Really Speak?

Reading the Bible

Journaling

Prayer

Circle of 4

Scripture Memory

Service

Fellowship

Evangelism

Hearing God

Spiritual Disciplines of Abstinence

Solitude

Silence

Fasting

Simplicity

Chastity

Secrecy

Sacrifice

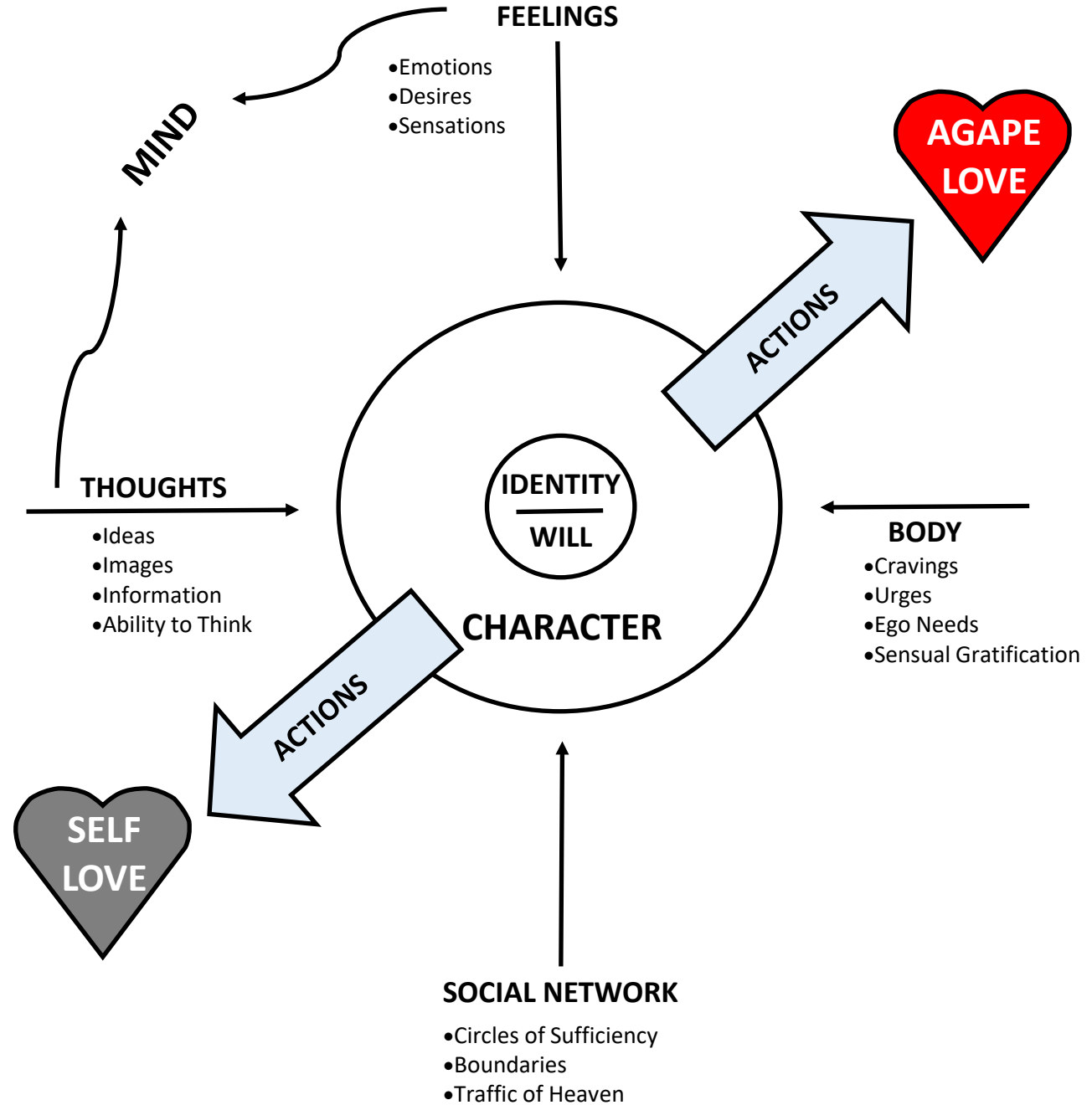
Technology Fast

The Many Ways the Word of God Comes to Us

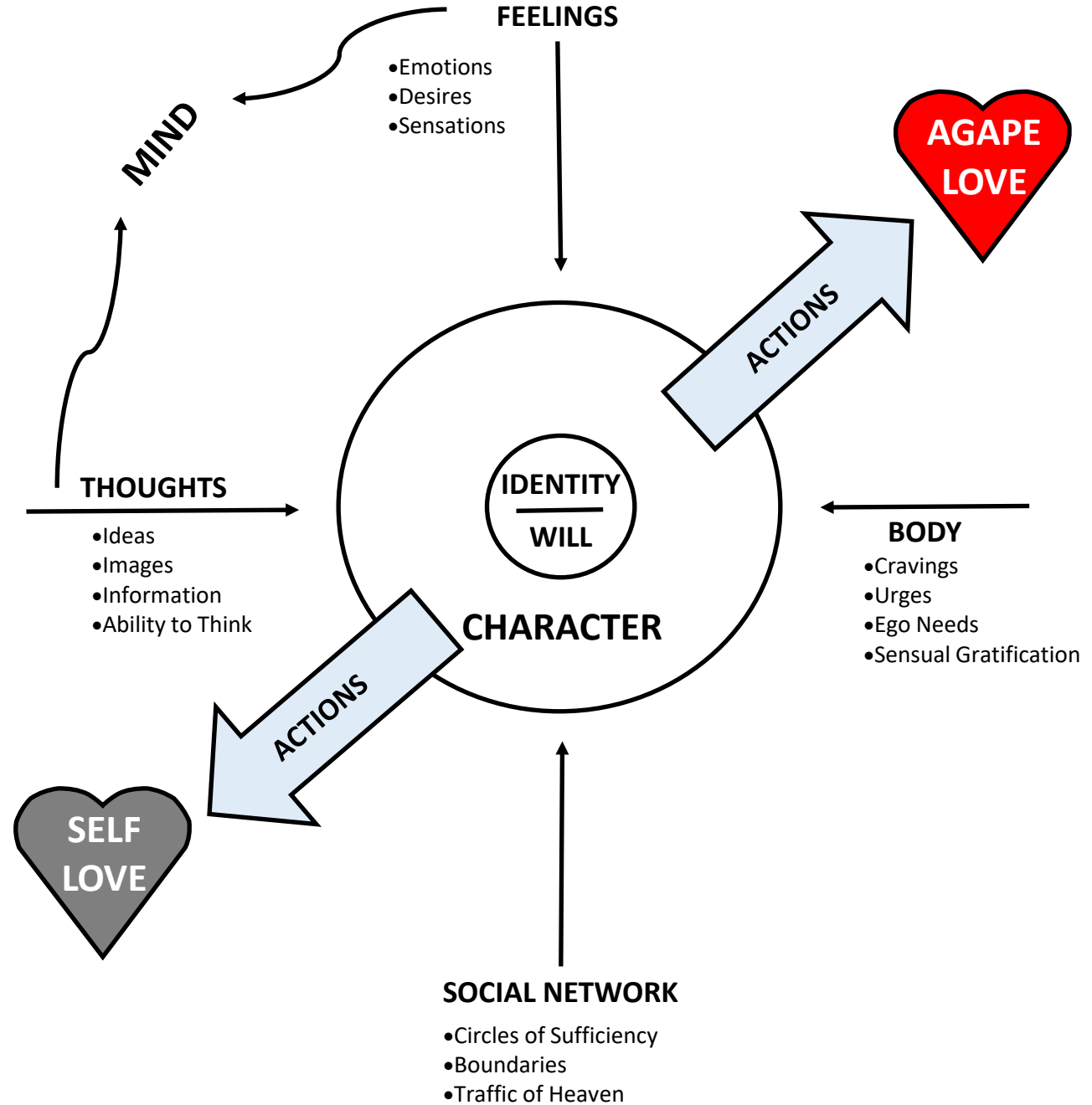


■ Creation ■ Dreams & Visions ■ Eternal Logos ■ Still Small Voice ■ Scripture ■ Fellow Believers ■ Circumstances ■ Kingdom Work

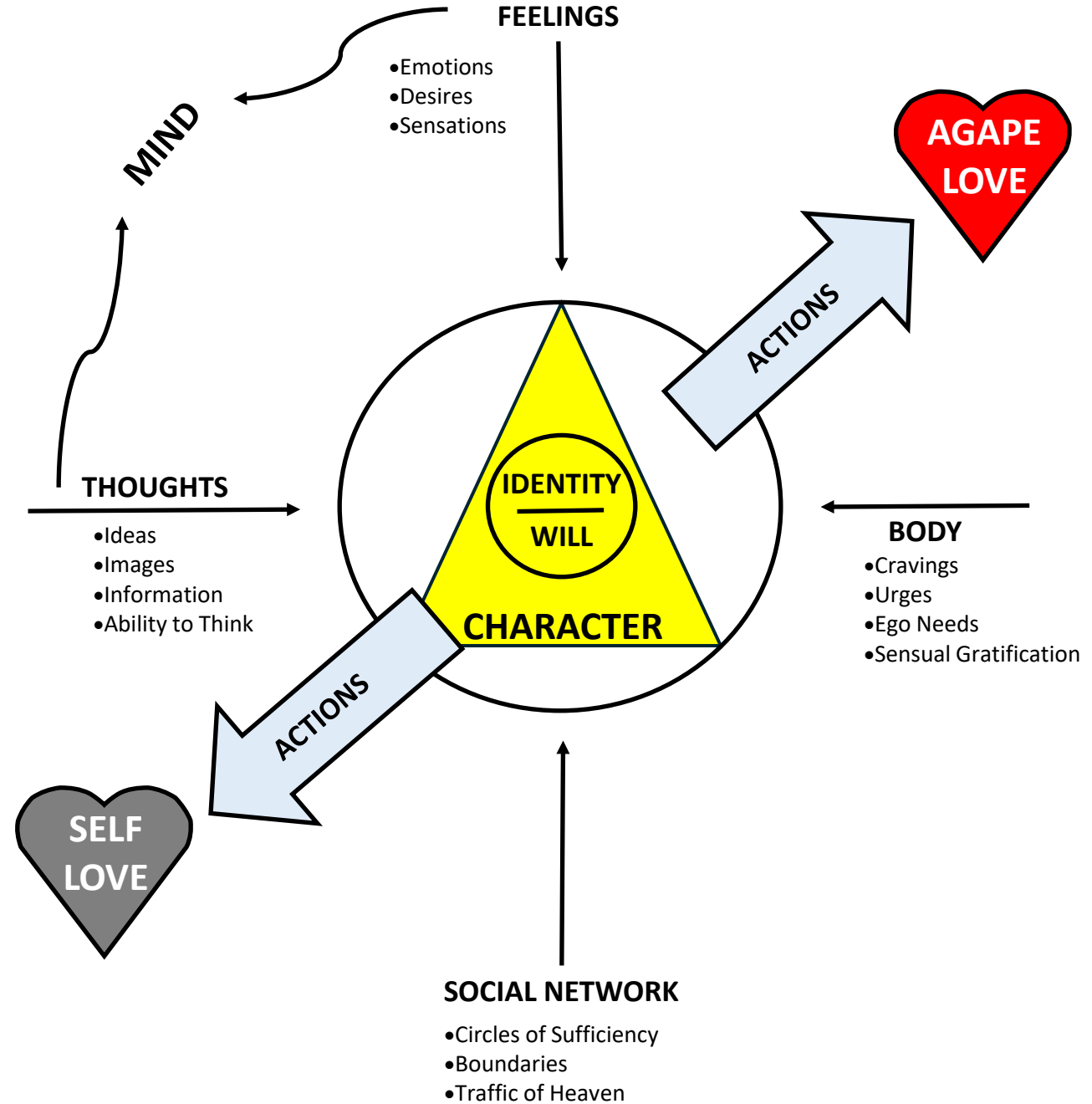
Spiritual Formation *in the Kingdom of God*



Spiritual Formation *in the Kingdom of God*



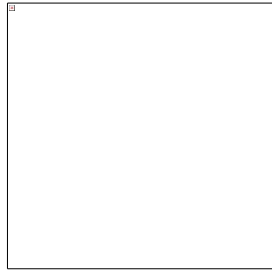
Spiritual Formation *in the Kingdom of God*



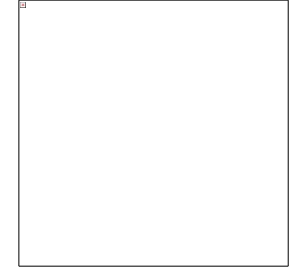
Your daily mantra...

I woke up in the Kingdom this morning

an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe



I breathe Kingdom air (LOVE)
I burn Kingdom fuel (GRACE)
I build Kingdom character
I do Kingdom work



Jesus came to show by example and to teach by principle how to have the best possible life in this physical world and preparation for the life to come at the same time