



Welcome to Spiritual Formation in Community

“We identify the voice of God speaking the same way we would any other voice.”

Check-In



***Describe your emotional
weather...***

(stormy, cloudy, calm, sunny)

and one reason why...

A Phenomenon Plus a Voice

The Call of Abram

Father of the Jewish nation that would be the people of God
Genesis 12:1-3 - Genesis 15:1-19

The Call of Moses

Lead Israel out of Slavery
Exodus 3:3-6

The Baptism of Jesus

God's approval of Jesus' ministry
Matthew 3:16-17

Jesus' Confrontation with Saul

The beginning of Saul's conversion
Acts 9:3-8

A Supernatural Messenger or Angel

The Truth About Angels

Angels are **not human beings**; they are supernatural beings on a divine mission

At times God himself is seen as an angel or accompanying angels

In the dozens of accounts where people were encountering angels, the people all seemed to be in a normal state of mind, and except for fear and an elevated nervous system, they had normal conversations.

Genesis 16:7 - Hagar was running away from Sarai and the Angel of the Lord found her and told her to go back home and have her son; he would be the first of descendants too numerous to count

Genesis 18:1-15 - Abraham and two angels visit Abraham and Sarah, and reveal that within a week Sarah will be pregnant

Dozens and dozens of other mentions of angels as a messenger

Dreams & Visions

- Dreams and visions are not the same thing, but are similar and may have happened coincidentally
- Both involve some degree of trancelike condition with a certain detachment from the person's actual surroundings
- Some dreams are not visions and some visions are not dreams
- Dreams seem to require a little more interpretation; in the Bible visions are more specific and provide more clarity without interpretation

Acts 16:9-10 - At night Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia telling him to come over to Macedonia and help them

Acts 9:10-12 - The Lord called to Ananias in a vision; and simultaneously to Saul in a vision as well

An Audible Voice

At times God has addressed human beings as simply a single audible voice.

Genesis 22:1-fff - God spoke to Abraham only as a voice about sacrificing his son, Issac

1 Samuel 3:1-14 - God spoke to Samuel as a boy, calling him to be a prophet, and inviting Samuel into what would develop one of the closest and most intimate conversational relationships with God any human being has ever had

A Human Voice

(These last two ways are most important)

They are most suited to God's presence in our lives as a close personal friend, and also most appropriate in the development of our inner person's character. **No method of communication is used more** in the Bible or the history of the church than the voice of a definite, individual human being.

Samuel Shoemaker, *With the Holy Spirit and with Fire*

"Something comes into our own energies and capacities and expands them. We are laid hold of by Something greater than ourselves. We can face things, create things, accomplish things, that in our own strength would have been impossible... The Holy Spirit seems to mix and mingle His power with our own, so that what happens is both a heightening of our own powers, and a gift to us from outside."

Dallas Willard, *Hearing God*

"This was of God speaking through human beings is best suited to God's purposes precisely because it most fully engages the faculties of free, intelligent beings who are socially interacting with agape love in the work of God as His co-laborers and friends."

Sometimes God puts the words in our mouths, and other times he simply uses the words that come out. Human beings are not God's robots.

Biblical Reference

Acts 4:13 - When the religious leaders saw the courage of Peter and John and realized they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and noted that Jesus was the one who had this effect on them.

Our Own spirit, and the Still Small Voice

God addresses us in our own spirit; our thoughts and feelings, and this is the primary subjective way God speaks to us

spirit = unbodily, non-physical, personal force

(The Oxford Dictionary)

1. The **non-physical** part of a person which is the **seat of emotions and character**; the **soul**; the **true self** capable of surviving physical death or separation
2. Those **qualities** regarded as forming the **definitive** or **typical elements** of the **character** of a person, nation or group or in the **thoughts** and **attitudes** of a particular period

Our spirit includes our inner person - *identity, will, character, thoughts and feelings; and where the Spirit of God lives within us*

Proverbs 20:27 - the spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord, and he uses our spirit to search our deepest parts; It is in this place where God's Spirit speaks to and through our inner person

Our Own spirit, and the Still Small Voice

Why God uses the Human Voice and the Still, Small Voice

*“The greater the spiritual maturity of the listener,
the greater the clarity of the message.”*

(In every believer) **two spirit beings are unified and inhabit each other**

- His thoughts become our thoughts
- His emotions become our emotions
- His laws become the foundation of our inner person
- His love becomes our love
- His faith becomes our faith
- Waking up in the Kingdom together, we together walk into the world with one mind and one purpose - the mind of Christ!

Characteristics of the Still Small Voice

This voice is an **unobtrusive, gentle whispering; unremarkable, inconspicuous, unassuming**, and may not be immediately noticed; It does not need to force itself to the front of your thoughts
(Young Samuel spoken to by God in 1 Samuel 3:8-9)

Carries a **weight or impact**, and **not dependent on physical sound**
While **the medium** by which the message comes **diminishes** almost to the vanishing point, **his communication** takes the form of **our thoughts** that **do not originate with us**
(Elijah the prophet running from Jezebel and Ahab led to a mountain to hear from God; 1 Kings 19:11-13)

God's voice has three characteristics

We **identify** the voice of God **speaking** to us **the same way** we would from any other human person trying to communicate with us. We would observe and measure the **quality, spirit**, and **content** of what was being communicated and **accept** or **reject** it based on those criteria

Quality - weight; character; impact

Spirit - the way Jesus spoke to his disciples and people with whom he was ministering

Content - principles from the Word of God, fundamental truths over individualized messages. God's voice will never contradict the Bible.

The Spirit's voice will **pass through our relationship and experience**.
In God we live and move and have our being. **(Acts 17:24-28)**

The Mind of Christ



1 Corinthians 2:1-5

- Paul's confession that he was not speaking to the Corinthians from a strategy of eloquence or worldly wisdom to convince them of something
- Paul spoke clearly, simply, in weakness, fear and with trembling the message of Christ and Him crucified
- The result was a demonstration of the Spirit's power

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Wisdom from the Spirit

The Mind of Christ



- Vs 9 - Having no concept (eyes to see, ears to hear, mind to conceive) what God has prepared for us - but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit
- Vs 11 - The Spirit searches all things, knows all things, and communicates to us how to understand what it means for us
- Vs 13 - Words taught by the Spirit - spiritual truths in spiritual words
- Vs 14 - Only understood by believers
- Vs 16 - But we have the mind of Christ

The Mind of Christ



Philippians 2:1-11

The Humility of Christ

- Vs 1-4 - Uniting with Christ
Learning the way of Christ
Living the life of Christ with others
- Vs 5 - Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus
- Vs 6-8 - Humility, service, obedience
- Vs 9-11 - Exalted by God; given authority and a role



What is the Mind of Christ?



A state of spiritual maturity,
aligning one's thoughts, attitudes and actions
with Jesus through the Holy Spirit

Humility & Service

- Submitting my will to God's will to serve the Kingdom

Perspective

- Seeing all of life through a Kingdom lens

Spiritual Discernment

- Acknowledging the role of the Spirit in giving me knowledge, understanding and wisdom

Unity

- The mind of Christ will always move toward unity and building up of the body of Christ

Surrender

- Actively responding to the prompting of the Spirit and bringing every thought captive to the authority of Christ



How to Have the Mind of Christ

Nurture a saving faith in Christ on a daily basis

Study the scriptures

Spend time in **a conversational relationship** with God

Get to **know** and **yield to** the **movement of the Spirit**

Surround oneself with **fellow believers**

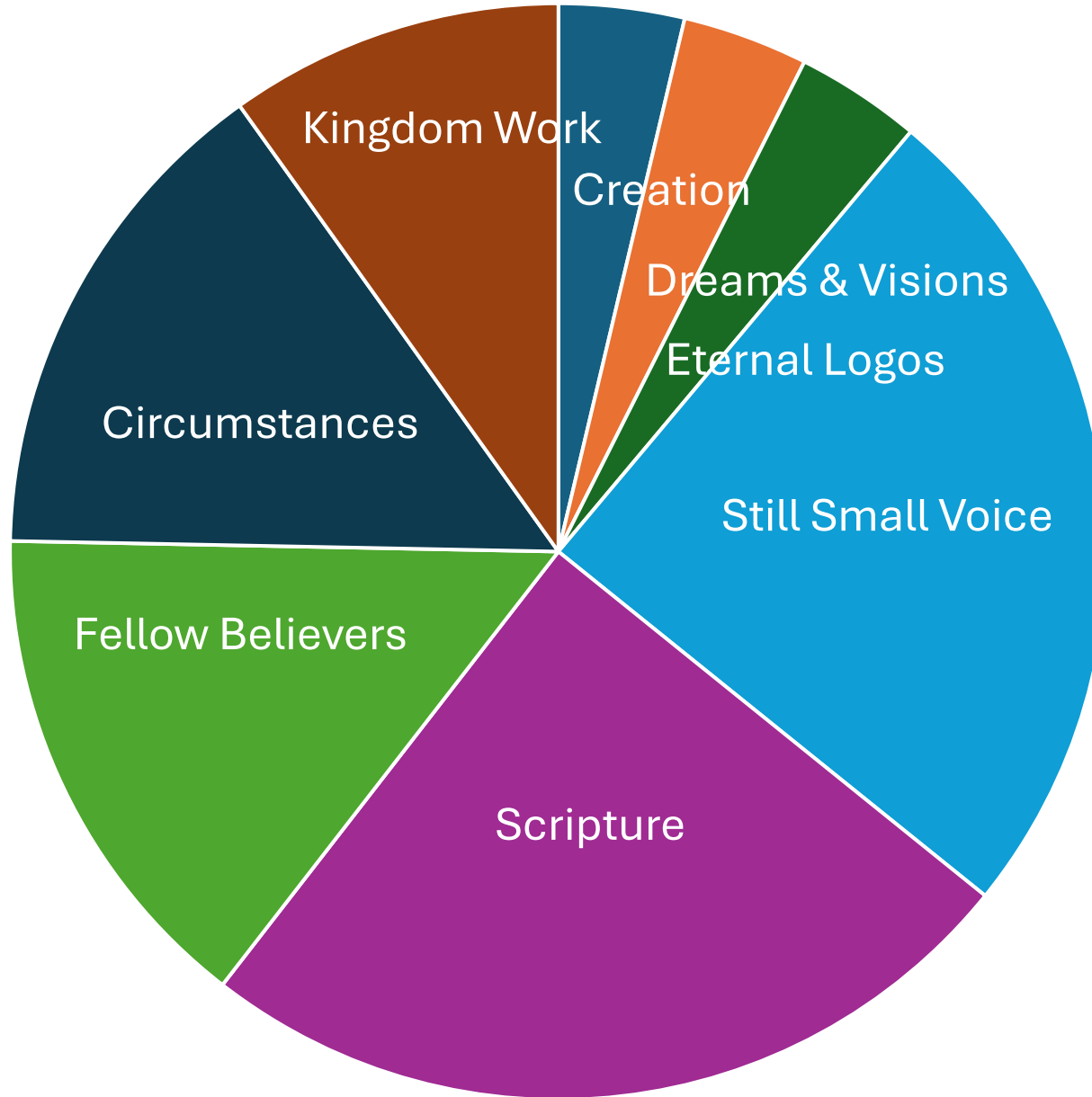
**Spend the week
listening for the voice of
the Spirit speaking to
you.**

- Write in your journal anything you feel God communicated to you and how
- Keep a list of the characteristics of the communication – quality, spirit, content

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 scene is dynamic, with bubbles and movement. The word 'Homework' is overlaid in large white letters.

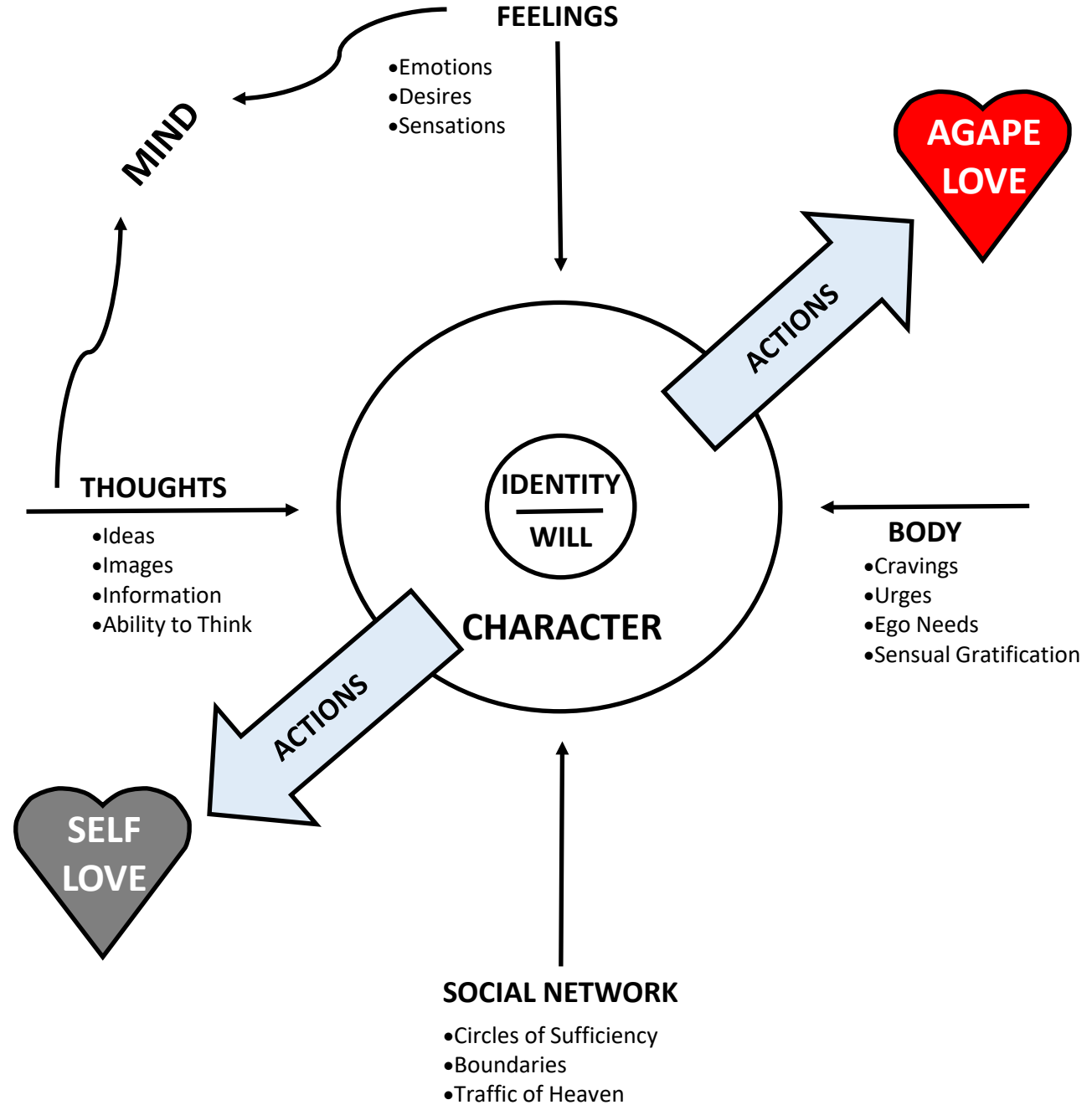
Homework

The Many Ways the Word of God Comes to Us

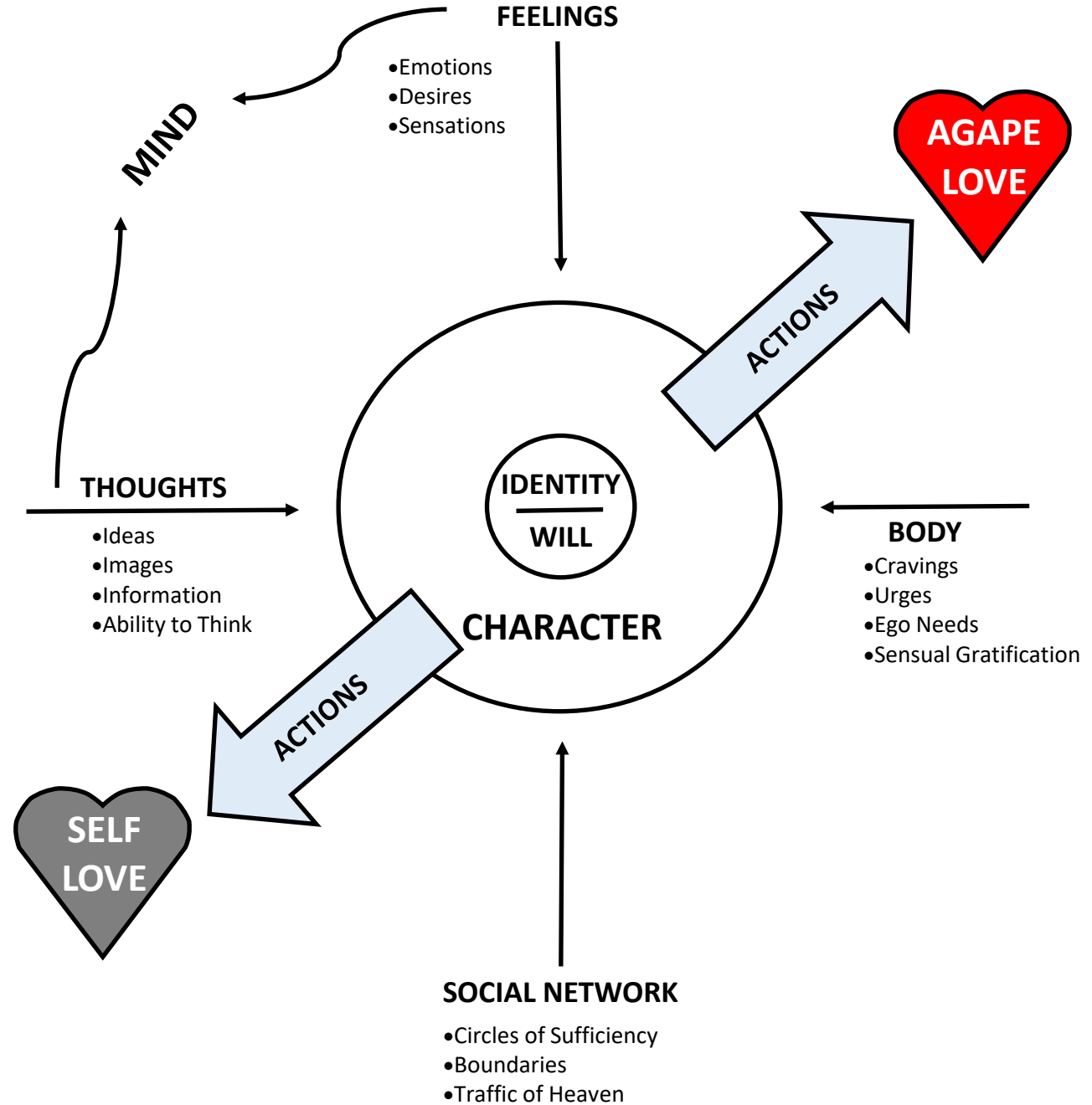


■ Creation ■ Dreams & Visions ■ Eternal Logos ■ Still Small Voice ■ Scripture ■ Fellow Believers ■ Circumstances ■ Kingdom Work

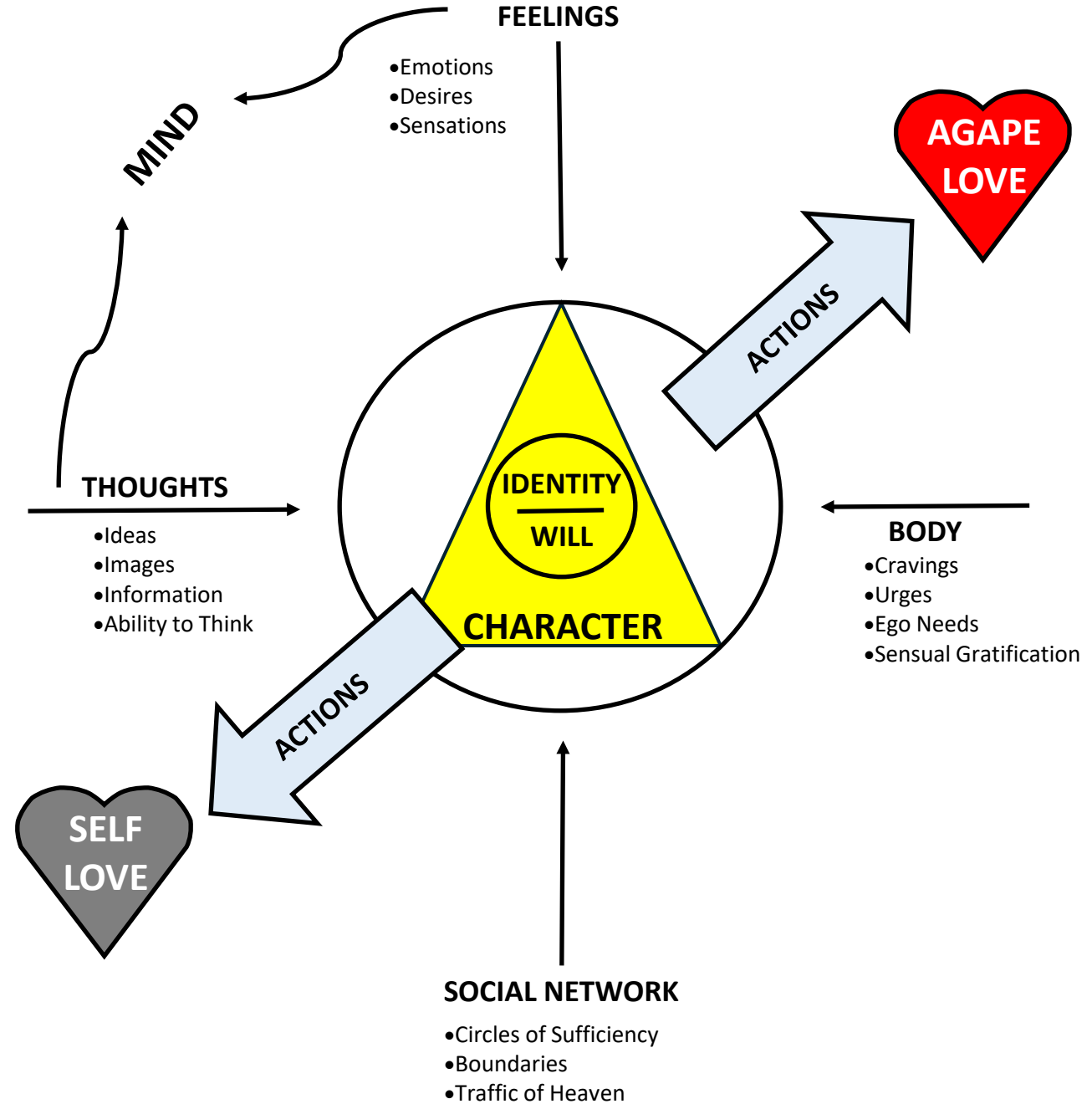
Spiritual Formation *in the Kingdom of God*



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