

# WELCOME TO THE CLASS!

## SUMMARY

We teach this class to communicate the value and nature of true community and to stress the importance of your personal growth and leadership. Christian discipleship comes by the Word, Spirit and People of God. Small group communities, the People of God, play a unique and important role in our spiritual growth. True community is a place where we feel safe, know others and are known; where we are accepted, loved and respected. The world, the flesh and the devil lie to us about our self-worth and identity, as a result, we learn to distrust ourselves, others and God. Small group communities can help us restore that trust and believe the truth of our identity in Christ.

This class is more than dispensing information. It is our aim to model and experience community. Even though this is only a taste of community, our goals for the class are:

## GOALS

1. To highlight the importance of **Personal Preparation** and Self-Awareness/Spiritual Growth
2. To develop a **Group Vision** - Starting well/Ending well
3. To teach and model **Leadership Skills** - Leading/Modeling

## CLASS OUTLINE

1. Introduction - One week
  - a. Week 1 - Mission/Roles
2. Preparing for Leadership – Two weeks

*Our goal is to highlight the importance of personal preparation as it relates to leading small groups. Our hope for you is to grow in self-awareness and in the truth that spiritual growth is the foundation of leadership.*

- a. Week 2 - Telling Your Story – Embracing Your True Identity
  - b. Week 3 - The Role of the Word of God in Your Life – Meditation
3. Getting Started - Using Your Small Group Starter Kit – Two weeks
  - a. Week 4 & 5 - Starter Kit
4. Leading toward True Community – Seven weeks
  - a. Week 6 - Understanding the Truth-Life Continuum
  - b. Week 7 - Developing Spiritual Friendships
  - c. Week 8 - 10 - Telling “Your” Story – Summaries
  - d. Week 11 - Turning Challenges Into Opportunities
  - e. Week 12 - Resolving Conflict
5. Ending Well – One week
  - a. Week 13 - Ending Well

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# Foundations for Small Group Leadership

## WEEK 1: MISSION / ROLES

### SUMMARY

Why do we do small groups? What's the link between small groups and our church's mission and vision? When you drive your car, you have a destination in mind and a plan to get there. Starting a small group is no different. Your group needs to understand their destination and how they will get there. The roadmap of our small groups begins with BHBC's Mission of **"Always Making Disciples"** and Vision of the **"Double Love Command"**. When we relate in **love** to our small group, we are living out this vision.

### GOALS

1. Understand the Mission, Vision and Values of Blythefield Hills Baptist Church
2. Understand how Real Life Groups support this vision
3. Understand the big picture of Small Groups

## CONTENT

1. Understand the Mission, Vision and Values of BHBC
  - a. Mission - What does “Always Making Disciples” mean?  
Definition: One who after facing their own brokenness finds God faithful and turns in gratitude to give.
  - b. Vision - What does “Double Love Command” mean?  
Definition: Love God and Love Others  
(Matthew 22:36-40)
  - c. Values - What are they?
2. Understand how Small Groups support this vision
  - a. Small groups are critical to the vision of the church. The relationship Louie has with the church when he preaches is one to many. It isn’t intended to be personal at a one on one level. However, spiritual growth cannot optimally occur outside of community. We need the Word of God, the Spirit of God and the People of God to grow. Therefore small groups are vital to the vision of our church.
3. Introduction to Small Group Leadership
  - a. Why you’re here? How can we participate in this vision? You’re here because someone saw something in you or you saw an opportunity to serve.
  - b. Understand servant leadership and facilitation
    - i. Servant Leadership - It’s not about perfection. It’s about a soft, fertile heart that can be tilled and cultivated to grow.
      1. The Armando Story - We love through our brokenness.
    - ii. Facilitation (Pressure) - We need to be aware of our attempts to be in “control.” It’s not “all up to me.”

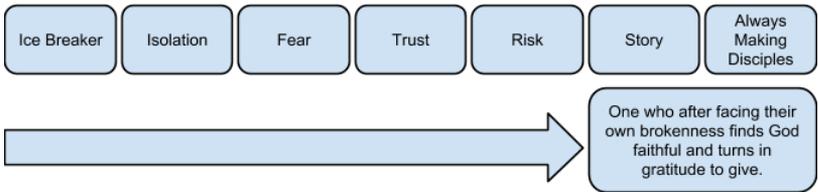
# Foundations for Small Group Leadership

## c. Identifying small group leader roles

- i. Leader/Facilitator
- ii. Co-Leader
- iii. Host
- iv. Apprentice Leader

## d. Big Picture of Small Groups

### Big Picture for Small Groups



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NOTES

## WEEK 2: TELLING OUR STORIES

### SUMMARY

Our self-image shapes leadership. Everything we do (including our leadership), we do according to our self-image. Therefore, the willingness to embrace our own story is a vital first step toward leadership.

Our lives are filled with events that have shaped our self-image for good or evil. Spiritual growth, then, involves a willingness to look at those shaping events, an honest appraisal of their impact and a reflection on how we interact with God and with people as a result. The more honest we are about our lives the more we'll agree with the Bible when it states that the enemy has come to kill, steal and destroy (John 10:10). Compared to God's glorious plan, our lives are tragic. Therefore, "understanding our stories" is at the heart of our discipleship.

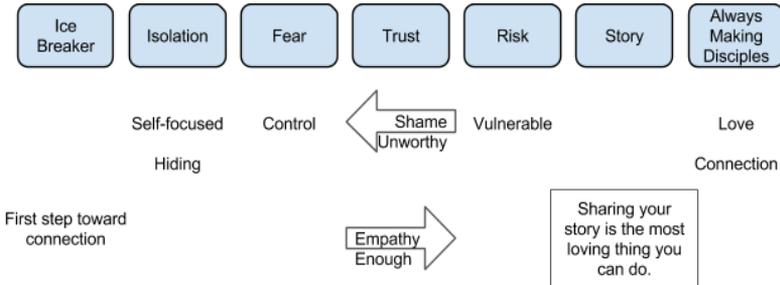
However, the "telling" of our stories is vitally important. Taking the risk to tell our life's story with others begins to restore our ability to trust. We've all been sinned against and we learn to sin in return. These patterns of relating shape how we view God, others and ourselves; and they destroy our ability to trust. But the Word of God tells us of God's heart for us and His desire for restoration. So redemption is at work when our communities not only accept us (and our stories), but speak the Word of Truth.

### GOALS

1. Understand the value of telling our stories
2. Understand the outline and begin getting familiar with your own story.
3. Model authenticity

## CONTENT

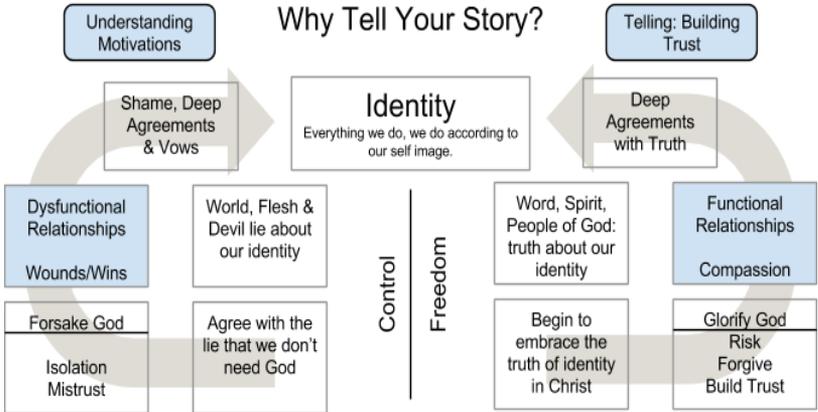
### Why do we tell our stories? How does this relate to “Always Making Disciples”?



**Understanding our stories.** The first reason we take the time to work through our stories is to begin to understand our motivations. We need to understand that we “live from” how we see ourselves, our identities. Secondly, we need to see that our identities are shaped in this fallen world by lies that come from the world, our flesh and the devil. When we live from a broken self-image, believing lies, we ultimately forsake God who is the source of truth. This always results in shame, isolation and mistrust because we believe we can “control” our destinies. Dysfunctional relationships become the norm where we are sinned against (“wounds”) or the lies are positively reinforced (“wins”). Relationships that revolve around lies perpetuate more lies causing a continual downward and destructive cycle.

**Telling our stories.** Learning to trust people with who we “really” are involves embracing the “truth” of who we are. When we stop trying to “control” our image or people’s responses, we begin to sense our vulnerability. But believing God gives us the freedom to be who we are invites us to begin to let people “in.” Embracing this truth of God’s love really comes into play when people don’t respond to our “risk” of letting them “in” the way we’d like them to. This can really hurt causing us to revert to “control” mode and can reinforce the lies we believe about ourselves. But God’s grace encourages us to forgive others, trusting Him to help us develop functional relationships characterized by compassion.

# Foundations for Small Group Leadership



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### WEEK 3: MEDITATION

#### SUMMARY

In week 2 we learned about the importance of understanding our stories. Today's lesson focuses on the role the Word of God plays in our personal preparation for leadership. If we come to the Word without "understanding our story" or not risking "telling our story", we may never know our "need" for the Word. When we begin to see more clearly our false identity and its impact, we'll realize we need to hear what God says to us and about us.

**We need to be reminded that spiritual leadership must start with something that's alive within me.** How we approach the Word will determine whether we feel connected to the Father. Jesus makes a clear statement that we need to be connected to Him, like the branch to the vine. When connected to the vine, the branch receives nourishment so that it can grow and bear fruit. When we approach the Word looking for connection we find nourishment. However, we often approach the Word like an instruction manual looking for content rather than relationship. In Proverbs 8, God uses the image of Wisdom calling out to us, which speaks to the urgency, and importance of connecting with Him. The reason we're talking about this is to be reminded not to lead out of our own resources. Rather, **spiritual leadership comes from connection to the Father.** If we learn small group leadership technique without a living connection to Him through His Word, we miss the mark.

#### GOALS

1. Understand the role of the Word of God in your life.
2. Understand meditation.
3. Encourage spiritual leadership to come from connection to the Father.

## CONTENT

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### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO LEADERSHIP?

We are talking about meditation for one reason alone: to enable us to personally connect with God. The enemy of our souls hates meditation. He is afraid when you get on this path. He cannot stop what God can do in you and through you when you meditate in the Word. We all need to be in the battle for our identity-vibrantly connected to my Father's truth toward me. Are we believing the truth or lies? Without being connected to God we really only offer small group leadership technique. Being in the Word personally enables us to help others be connected to the source of Truth. This is a crucial part of small groups.

Many believers do not experience personal connection with God. We long to provide hope. To assume you and I cannot enjoy a personal connection with God is based on lies and/or discouragement. Many believers doubt they can personally connect with God. Therefore, we will discuss what it means to connect with God. Then we will focus on meditation.

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### WHAT IS MEDITATION? - CONNECTING PERSONALLY WITH GOD

The great God of the universe, the Creator of all things, longs for us to experience Him. In the garden Adam and Eve communed with God-daily. Put yourself in the garden. Would God want to walk with you too? Yes! This is His dream. Believe it. We must remind ourselves that God's heart toward us has not changed in any way since the garden. He loves to walk with us today like He did with Adam and with Eve.

It's God's dream to relate to you personally. A.W. Tozer says, "The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they...may delight in His Presence, may taste and know that inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts...The continuous unembarrassed interchange of love and thought between God and the soul of the redeemed person is the throbbing heart of New Testament religion" (The Pursuit of God).

Be careful. Something in our flesh counters these thoughts by saying, "That will never be my experience." We must resist our negative thoughts, which attempt to overshadow the truth. Please tune in to any negative self-talk. Bring it honestly to God and ask Him to speak to you

## Foundations for Small Group Leadership

about those thoughts. Replace those negative thoughts with the truth: God deeply desires to connect with you.

God has clearly told you that He desires you to know Him personally. Listen to the opening verses of Isaiah 55 as God expresses His heart's desire for you:

“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me that your soul may live.” (Isaiah 55: 1-3a)

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### ENCOURAGEMENT - DON'T EXPECT IT TO BE EASY

Did you ever stop to think about why personal devotions are such a struggle for believers? Our amazing God loves us and in the core of our being--our redeemed heart—we long for Him too. So this should be a downhill cakewalk. Right? It's not that simple because spiritual warfare is going on. We are opposed. The enemy does not want us to personally connect with God through His Word. The enemy will throw every discouragement and distraction our way to block it. We also battle with the flesh. Our flesh is opposed to desiring God.

Tozer puts it this way, “So the life of man upon the earth is a life away from the ‘Presence’, wrenched loose from that ‘blissful center’ which is our right and proper dwelling place, our first estate which we kept not, the loss of which is the cause of our unceasing restlessness. The whole work of God in redemption is to undo the tragic effects of that foul revolt, and to bring us back again into right and eternal relationship with Himself. This requires that...the way be opened for us to return again into conscious communion with God and to live again in the Presence as before.”

One way we connect with God is through meditation in His word.

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## George Mueller Quote

"...my practice had been...for ten years...to give myself to prayer...in the morning. Now I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God and to meditation on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reproved, instructed; and that thus, while meditating, my heart might be brought into experimental, communion with the Lord. I began therefore, to meditate on the New Testament, from the beginning, early in the morning.

The first thing I did was...begin to meditate on the Word of God. Searching, as it were, into every verse, to get blessing out of it...obtaining food for my own soul. Now what is the food for the inner man; not prayer, but the Word of God and here again not the simple reading of the Word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering over it, and applying it to our hearts...I dwell so particularly on this point because of the immense spiritual profit and refreshment I am conscious of having derived from it myself, and I affectionately and solemnly beseech all to ponder this."

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## OPPOSITION TO MEDITATION

It is unbelievably common for every believer to be opposed in the area of nurturing a personal connection with God.

Richard Foster states, "In contemporary society the Adversary majors in three things: noise, hurry and crowds. If he can keep us involved in "muchness" and "manyness" he will rest satisfied. If we hope to move beyond the superficialities of our culture, including our religious culture, we must be willing to go down into creating silences" (Celebration of Discipline)

Opposition can be defined as an "unguarded heart".

Proverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else guard your heart, for from your heart flows the wellspring of life." Can you imagine not setting a guard before your most treasured possession? We are not careless with our 401ks. We don't leave the keys in our car. So why not care deeply about our own heart?

We need to address some significant issues of discouragement that may arise. We know many good people who encounter a lot of difficulty in

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connecting with God. I know good people who love God and yet they wrestle honestly for years not feeling loved or feeling connected with Him. Please be patient with your journey; God longs to encourage you and invite you to His heart.

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### COMMON DIFFICULTIES IN MEDITATING

Many of us carry unhealed wounds from our life's journey. Take for example, an abusive or critical father who never connected with you in a kind and loving way. Those wounds can result in a significant and discouraging struggle to connect with God. We invite you to a healing path within the context of safe community. We invite you to be known with these wounds with a few trusted friends who can be the heart and voice of Jesus to you. This path of healing is a long, tough path but with trusted spiritual guides you can make progress.

A second difficulty is quality time. We can't say it strongly enough that the pursuit of God requires a consistent pattern of being quiet with Him. Fostering a personal connection with God grows over years of consistent time with Him; this journey cannot be quickened by our American impatience. Please don't believe you cannot connect personally with God or experience Him deeply if your life is not characterized by a deep pursuit of His heart. Start with small steps. Please don't give into discouragement!

Last of all, many people believe they have to know a lot about the Bible before they can begin to understand or meditate in the Scriptures. This often creates a sense of inadequacy and fear to even approach the Word of God. "I'm so ignorant and stupid; God couldn't speak to me through His Word." That simply is not true. While we certainly encourage the study of God's Word through Bible dictionaries, commentaries, etc. (all of which are available in our church library) this is not necessary to begin to meditate in God's Word. The smallest child can hear from God through His Word.

So, please know God is not coming to beat you up, make you feel bad, or put pressure on you. He is inviting you to His heart. He wants you to begin where you are and to take steps toward Him—no pressure. Put the oars in the water and reach for Him; don't float downstream in discouragement.

## PRACTICAL TIPS FOR MEDITATION

- Meditation is not complicated. It is simple. “The spiritual giants would laugh at the idea that meditation is reserved for the privileged few” (Foster, Celebration of Discipline)
- Read a short passage of Scripture and then make note of what phrases catch your attention. Trust that the Holy Spirit is bringing that phrase to your attention and pause at length to reflect on that phrase.
- Get all the juice out it before moving on to another phrase. “Less is more!”

Please reject all pressure and all guilt. This is a clean invite from the very heart of your “...fiercely jealous lover.” He is knocking on the door. He is in love with you and He is pursuing you fresh this morning. He can’t help Himself--you are His child!

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## QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO CONSIDER

1. Name the specific obstacles that prevent you from meditation or reflection. Is it discouragement, guilt, lies, lack of desire or past wounds which make it difficult to connect with love?
2. Think about an action step you can take in order to go further on the path of personally connecting with God through meditation. For example, you might take something out of your busy schedule so you can spend more time with God daily or you might replace just reading the scriptures with meditating on phrases or particular verses taken from the Scripture. Maybe you need to prayerfully consider asking a trustworthy friend or two to help you work through a deep wound that needs healing.

3. Tozer says, “The type of Christianity which happens now to be in vogue knows this Presence only in theory. It fails to stress the Christian’s privilege of present realization. According to its teachings we are in the presence of God by position. Typically, nothing is said about the need to experience that Presence actually.” Name your current battle that wages against the truth that God wants to meet personally with you. Be clear as you try to tune in to what you typically think regarding your potential to connect with Him. What discourages you most? What lie do you tend to believe about your journey to connect with God?
  
4. Choose a passage from the Bible and take time to meditate on it. Read it through and take note of any words or phrases that seem to “jump out” or stir your heart. Prayerfully reflect on why those words or phrases may be speaking to you right now. Is there anything going on in your life that the Holy Spirit might be speaking to? If nothing seems to “speak” to you, don’t fret. Prayerfully read the passage again. Linger long on words and thoughts as you prayerfully consider what the Holy Spirit might be saying to you. Write down anything that seems meaningful. Take note of what this experience is like for you. Were the distractions too overwhelming to concentrate? What are those distractions about? Are you worrying about something? Acknowledge those concerns and bring them to God. Maybe He wants to speak to those issues through the text you’re reflecting on.

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NOTES

### WEEK 4: USING YOUR SMALL GROUP STARTER KIT

#### SUMMARY

One of the greatest gifts a leader can give his small group is starting with the end in mind. Without this perspective your group may likely take one of two common paths. You'll either have members wanting to leave and not knowing how, or you'll have a group that never ends because everyone is too comfortable. In the first example we most likely have a problem of safety and lack of trust, and in the second we probably have a problem of complacency and lack of vision.

Therefore these four core essentials can help start your group on the right path:

1. **Icebreakers** begin to create a safe environment by helping people feel at ease.
2. A group **covenant** helps build a common vision and develop trust.
3. The **five building blocks** of groups give us balance and continuity.
4. Understanding the **life stages of a small group** prepare a group to navigate normal relational challenges.

#### GOALS

##### This Week

1. Understand the value of starting well (with the "end" in mind)
2. Understand how to use the Starter Kit
  - a. The importance of a Covenant
  - b. Understand the Five Building Blocks of Real Life Groups

##### Next Week

3. Understand how to use the Starter Kit
  - a. Understanding the Life Stages of Relationships
  - b. The value of Ending Well

## CONTENT

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### ICEBREAKERS

Using icebreakers is a basic and important skill to develop in the initial stages of a new group. Good share questions facilitate meaningful discussion that enables group members to open up and know each other. These are important steps in building trust and a sense of team.

Three types of icebreakers:

- General information
  - What was your best/worst vacation?
  - What would be your dream vacation?
  - People might be surprised to find out that I \_\_\_\_\_.
- Personal (deeper)
  - What was the best and worst part of your day/week?
  - What is one thing you like and don't like about yourself?
  - What has the most power to draw you away from God?
- Introduction to your topic of study (i.e. the fear of the Lord)
  - Talk about a time when you were afraid.  
What happened?
  - What is one of your greatest fears and why?

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### COVENANTS

Covenants are simply a common set of expectations that are shared by every member. In this way covenants are the foundation of intentional, trusting relationships. Redemptive relationships require trust. Building this trust takes time but it also takes intentionality. We want to strike a balance between content and getting to know one another. How do we build these kinds of relationships? Developing our covenant is the first step in answering this question. Taking the time as a small group to talk through these expectations is time well spent.

We want to avoid making this covenant a “legal” contract that feels too heavy but we also don't want to dismiss its value. In order to make this group enjoyable and safe, we need to hear what is important to everyone.

**Remember, the goal is trust. In order to get to trust, we have to risk being vulnerable. People are more likely to risk if they know the ground rules.**

## THE FIVE BUILDING BLOCKS OF REAL LIFE GROUPS

### 1. Scripture/Truth (Our Foundation) - Hebrews 4:12 (NASB)

- a. Not just the truth about God, but also the truth about you. What does the word of God say about who we are in Christ? Louie says, "Everything we do, we do according to our self-image." We have got to deal with it. (Good resource: YouTube - "Without Purpose Little is accomplished" posted Oct. 30, 2012.)

Matthew 12:33 (MSG) If you grow a healthy tree, you'll pick healthy fruit. If you grow a diseased tree, you'll pick worm-eaten fruit. The fruit tells you about the tree.



Diseased Tree - Believing Lies



Healthy Tree - Nourished w/ Truth

### 2. Honesty/Life Sharing - Until you're known, you're still alone.

- a. We wear masks in order to get people to like us, but they like us only when we take them off.
- b. Without honesty, it's like relating through a glass. We don't truly connect and bond.
- c. James 5:16 (NASB) – "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

### 3. Prayer - Admission of our dependency on God.

- a. James 5:16b (NASB) – "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

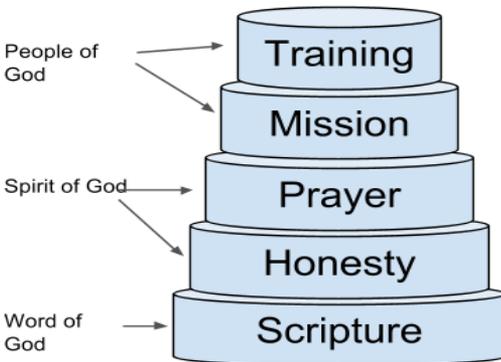
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4. Mission/Serving - (Matt 28:19-20, Gal 6:10)
  - a. Serving should start with those closest to us. Examples: Meals when people are sick, funerals, surgeries, baby showers, etc.
  - b. Serving the community: See Sylvia Veal and she can set you up with serving opportunities.
  - c. Each group is assigned a missionary.
5. Training/Apprentice Leadership
  - a. We should be developing our leadership. This could be small group leadership, worship leader, in the home, at work, etc.
  - b. Recognizing leadership potential in others and pouring into them. Be looking for people on the grow.

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## CONCLUSION

The Three Pillars  
(in that order, with balance)



- When we believe the truth, we'll believe we have something to offer.
- When we are honest, we'll know what the needs are so we can serve more effectively.
- When are honest about our lives, we can pray more effectively.
- When we believe the truth about God and the truth about who we are, we will risk being honest.

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NOTES

## WEEK 5: USING YOUR SMALL GROUP STARTER KIT

### SUMMARY

One of the greatest gifts a leader can give his small group is starting with the end in mind. Without this perspective your group may likely take one of two common paths. You'll either have members wanting to leave and not knowing how, or you'll have a group that never ends because everyone is too comfortable. In the first example we most likely have a problem of safety and lack of trust, and in the second we probably have a problem of complacency and lack of vision.

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2. A group **covenant** helps build a common vision and develop trust.
3. The **five building blocks** of groups give us balance and continuity.
4. Understanding the **life stages of a small group** prepare a group to navigate normal relational challenges.

### GOALS

#### Last Week

1. Understand the value of starting well (with the "end" in mind)
2. Understand how to use the Starter Kit
  - a. The importance of a Covenant
  - b. Understand the Five Building Blocks of Real Life Groups

#### This Week

3. Understand how to use the Starter Kit
  - a. Understanding the Life Stages of Relationships
  - b. The value of Ending Well

## CONTENT

### THE LIFE STAGES OF A SMALL GROUP

Four stages of any authentic relationship. These stages apply to our relationship with God, groups, friends, marriage, ministries, etc.

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#### 1. **ENCHANTMENT** - "ALL I CAN SEE IS WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT YOU."

What this looks like in a group:

- Group members check out the group seeing if it suits them
- Low level of vulnerability in communication due to fear
- High hopes, enthusiasm and expectations
- Mutual acceptance on a surface level
- High level of uncertainty

We love our illusions. We love to believe people can fill our soul longings.

Psalm 62:1-2 (MSG) "God the one and only. I'll wait as long as He says. Everything I need comes from Him, so why not? He's solid rock under my feet, breathing room for my soul, an impregnable castle: I'm set for life."

Question every person is asking: **Men:** Do I have what it takes? **Women:** Will you fight for me?

At any given moment the question is: Who do you believe offers food for your soul, who do you believe has the answer to your question - God or man? If we believe it is God, we will not fear men. If we believe it is men, we will not fear God.

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#### 2. **PAIN** - "ALL I CAN SEE IS WHAT'S BAD ABOUT YOU."

What this looks like in a group:

- Loss of initial enthusiasm (They express their disappointment by coming late, drop out, flimsy excuses for not coming to group).
- Irritation with the other members (They talk too much, know-it-all, harsh and domineering).

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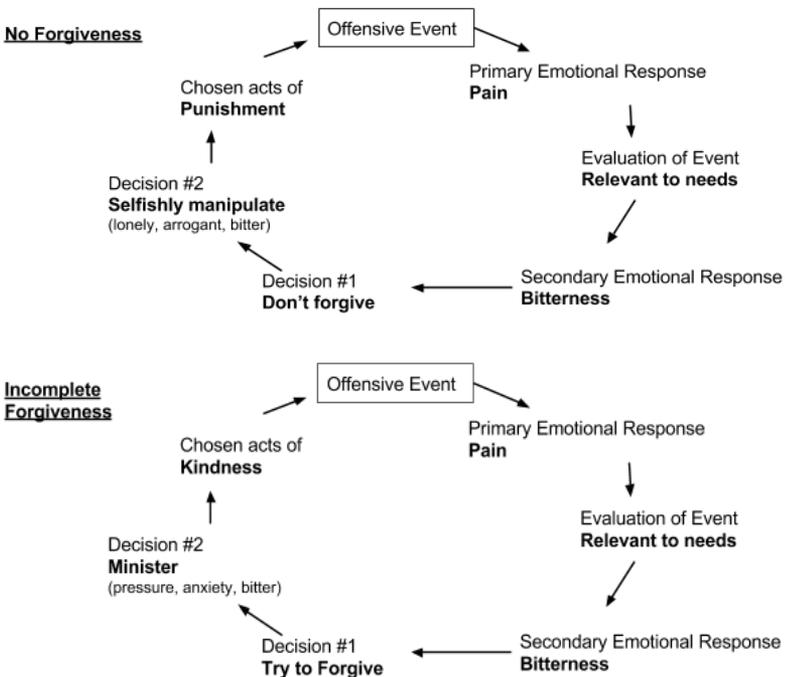
- Members are disappointed with the leader for various reasons
- Members have concerns that the group is not going to offer what they had hoped for
- Questions emerge about the real purpose of the group
- The core group of committed members begin to emerge

What we need to move from pain to growth - Forgiveness, humility, self-awareness, the Word of God, the Spirit of God and the People of God.

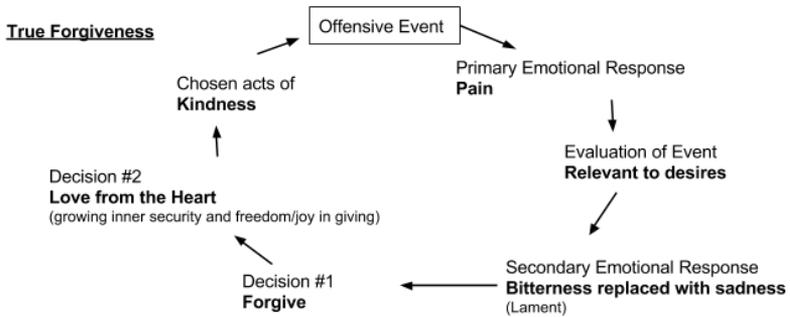
Pain feels like our greatest problem, but true change (repentance) cannot occur until we see what our deepest problem is. Our deepest problem is ourselves and our sin.

Jeremiah 2:13 (NLT) "For my people have done two evil things: They have abandoned me - the fountain of living water. And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all!"

Any time we go to people for life or to answer our question... Jeremiah 2:13 is what we're doing. We're forsaking God and going to broken cisterns.



## Foundations for Small Group Leadership



Ephesians 4:31-32 (NLT) “Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another just as God through Christ has forgiven you.”

The original Greek word for “get rid” is “airo” meaning “to bring up.” Commentary said it’s a sailing term meaning “to lift up an anchor of a ship so it can sail free.”

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### 3. **GROWTH** - “I’M BEGINNING TO SEE WHAT’S BROKEN IN ME.”

You stop pointing fingers and start looking at your own heart.

What it looks like in a group:

- Members sense a clear commitment to one another
- Clear agreement on goals/covenant
- A greater sense of safety and acceptance in the group
- Group members feel like they can be themselves without pretending
- Greater freedom to openly affirm one another, challenge and admonish
- The group wants to accomplish something significant
- People are growing spiritually
- A sense of the group being “our group” with each person providing leadership, using their spiritual gifts, etc.

## Foundations for Small Group Leadership

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### 4. **JOY** - "I'M LEARNING TO LOVE THOSE WHO DEEPLY DISAPPOINT ME."

What it looks like in a group:

- Evaluations and reflections
- Reviewing the journey together
- Celebrating how God is working in their lives through one another
- Members may share their regret for what was not accomplished
- Expression of sadness that the group is coming to an end
- Each person reflects about their next step in pursuing God

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### ENDING WELL

This lesson of "Ending Well" is about balancing our group's needs with the needs of the larger church community. There is a tendency to either keep going too long (Linger) or end prematurely (Fizzle). It comes down to "Always Making Disciples". Are you making disciples? It's not just about what we can get; it's about what we can give. Groups that stay together too long may be focusing on their own comfort at the exclusion of other's discipleship. The more successful your group is the stronger the pull to Linger. On the other hand if our groups end too soon we probably aren't achieving our goals.

This is a vital step and cannot be overlooked. Because of the importance, we will cover this in depth as a standalone lesson for Week 13.

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NOTES

## WEEK 6: UNDERSTANDING THE TRUTH-LIFE CONTINUUM

### SUMMARY

This lesson is about the balance between truth and life. A truth-only group can be completely oblivious to real life needs of people. Truth is essential for spiritual maturity, however we can use it as a mask or barrier to keep from being known. A Life-only group can be completely oblivious to God's heart for us; we make the group about us. We're more focused on being accepted than maturing in Christ. When we have both truth and life in balance true spiritual community emerges. This community is built on the principle of authenticity not solely on agreement to truth or the principle of acceptance.

### GOALS

1. Appreciate the power of God through community
2. Improve our ability to detect a lack of balance
3. Model the balance of truth and life and authenticity

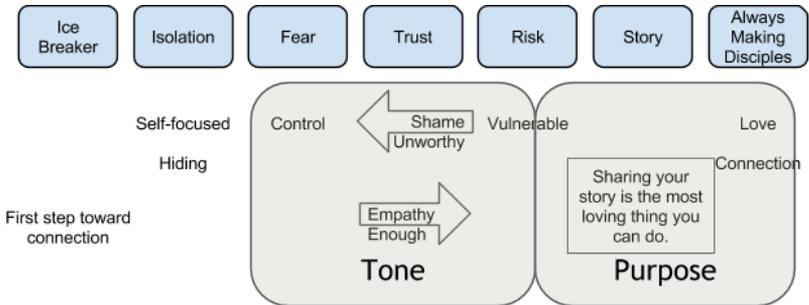
### CONTENT

#### What is a Disciple?

- John 13:35 - "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."
- Mission of BHBC: "Always Making Disciples"
- What does that mean? Our definition: One who after facing their own brokenness finds God faithful and turns in gratitude to give.
- Our goal is Christ-Centered relationships of Love and Connection.

# Foundations for Small Group Leadership

Remember the Big Picture for Small Groups...

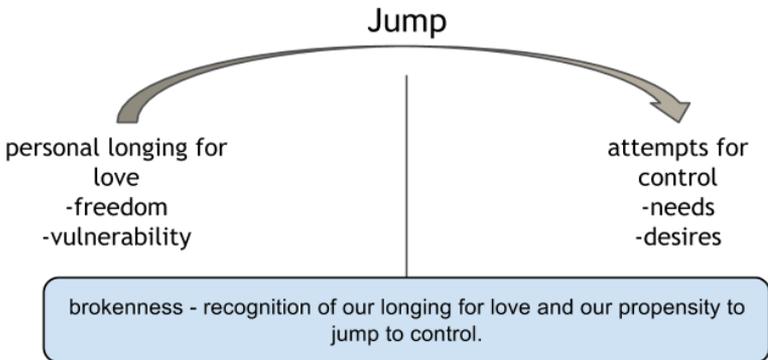


Purpose: Our Love and Connection with People

Tone: We make room for people and God

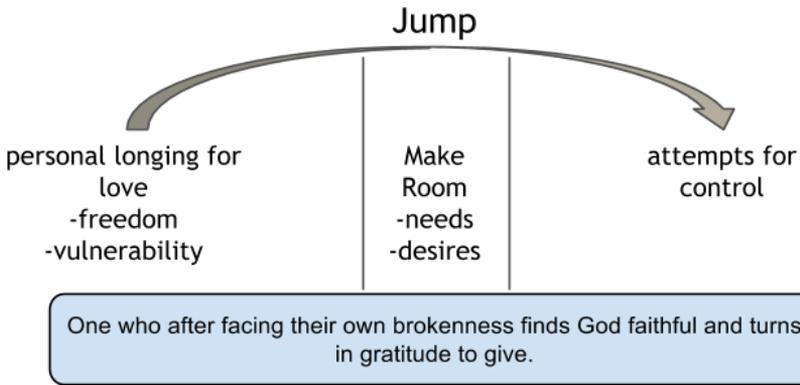
## Look before you leap...

We have a tendency to “jump” to control, out of our brokenness, to get our needs and desires met.



# Foundations for Small Group Leadership

But we need to pause and make room for God.

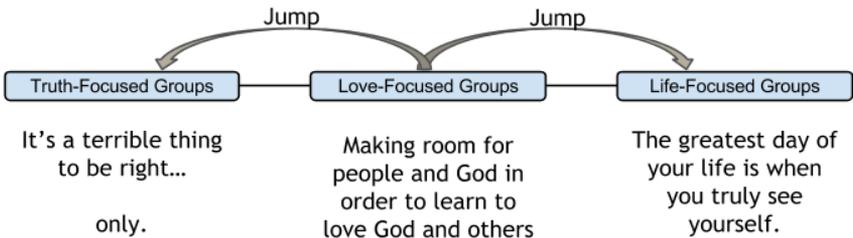


## Avoiding extremes

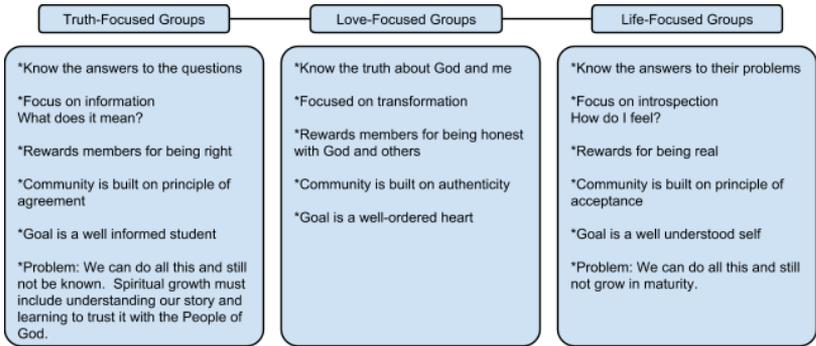
- Ecc 7:18 "The man who fears God will avoid all extremes."

How do we get there? We can do either extreme (Truth-only or Life-only) in our own strength but the only way to achieve balance is through the help of the Holy Spirit. The balance and goal is a Love-Focused group.

Creating a place in the intersection



# Foundations for Small Group Leadership



Questions to consider about either extreme...

- Truth Focused: Have you ever been in a group that has been where you haven't felt known? What did that feel like? What was the impact?
- Life Focused: Have you ever been in a group that you didn't feel like you were growing and that it was going anywhere?

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NOTES

### WEEK 7: DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIPS

#### SUMMARY

By default we approach relationships and groups with insecurities that are fueled by fear. Everyone has good reasons to distrust because of hurts and disappointments. Therefore, there is a constant pull toward hiding and isolation. This lesson of “Developing Spiritual Friendships” is about bridging the gap of our isolation. Spiritual friendships help bridge this gap by moving us toward being known. With a focus on acceptance, we can be ourselves without the pressure to pretend. There is a contrast between acceptance and duty (“Do I feel pressure to come through for you in amazing ways?”). Friendships are patient and comfortable. However, as your spiritual friend I don’t have everything you need.

Everything we need is found in knowing God. God is our Father who longs to restore us and be with us. He made us to increase His glorious kingdom. Our spiritual friendships are a vital link to knowing God. We cannot see our own hearts clearly; we need spiritual friends to help us discern when we’re blind to our idolatry. They call us to a higher standard, as Proverbs 27:17 says “iron sharpens iron.” Hebrews 10:24 says “let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” This isn’t about telling each other what to do, but about who to know. Being known by friends allows us to know God better.

#### GOALS

1. To understanding the importance of spiritual friendship
2. To grow in awareness of masks people wear
3. To develop a strategy to bridge the gap of isolation

## CONTENT

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### WHAT STIRS IN OUR HEARTS (THE DEEP WATERS)

Proverbs 20:5 (NASB) – “A plan in the heart of a man is like deep water, but a man of understanding draws it out.”

We all want to be men and women of understanding that draw it out, but how do we get there?

Have all your waters spilled. Know God, know yourself and be known with others.

Psalm 77:19 (NLT) – “Your road led through the sea, your pathway through the mighty waters - a pathway nobody knew was there.”

God will take us through the deep waters, heal our hearts and still our waters...if we let Him.

Dr. Thomas Malone, a psychiatrist, when describing what psychiatry was all about said:

Almost every emotional problem can be summed up in one particular bit of behavior - people walking around screaming, “For God sake, love me!” He goes through a million different manipulations to get somebody to love him. On the other hand, healthy people are those who walk around looking for someone to love.

This is what redemptive curiosity is all about; being other-centered.

## Foundations for Small Group Leadership

Gen 3:9 “Where are you?” (I miss you.)

“God’s first word to fallen humanity has all the marks of grace. It is a question. To help humanity, He must draw us out rather than drive us out of hiding.”

“Asking good questions helps people process. It grants people respect by allowing them to come to terms with truth and it gives them the space to do it.” (Dave Rohrer)

### **Developing the skill of listening beneath words.**

Words express concrete, obvious content and subtle, hidden content. Be willing to listen for both.

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## ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS

### **Use Door Openers**

A door opener: Speaking words that convey a genuine interest in hearing more.

Door openers communicate two crucial elements:

- I am interested in whatever you have to say.
- I will accept you regardless of what you say.

Door openers also include:

- Clarification - Making sure you understand what the person means and says. Ask questions or repeat back what you think the other person meant. Don’t assume you know, if you’re not sure, ask!
- Exploring - Learn to ask biblically-guided questions that explore what people are thinking, feeling and longing for in their relationship with God and others.
- Reflection - This serves as a mirror, reflecting back to the person what they are feeling and saying.

### Door Closers

Too often we respond to people's attempts to test the water with a door closer.

Door closers communicate a hint of rejection or criticism, and therefore "close the door" on any hope of further, meaningful sharing.

Five ways to close the door on a conversation:

1. **Defensive or explanatory words** - Explanations (when offered first) are usually attempts at excusing ourselves from what we did. They communicate a lack of concern or interest in what the other person was saying or feeling. Explanations, when valid, can be helpful after the other person's thoughts and feelings have been explored and understood.
2. **Quick apologies** - Quick apologies are usually ways of saying you really don't want to get into the real issues. "I'm sorry. Let's leave it at that and be done." A quick apology is a way of trying to fix or avoid the problem rather than explore and really face what you did.
3. **Corrections** - Telling the other person that they are not feeling what they say they feel shuts the conversation down. Thoughts and feelings need to be accepted and understood before they are corrected.
4. **Quick Advice** - When someone shares a problem, they want to be understood before listening to solutions (unless they ask for advice). Many wonder why others respond negatively to their helpful advice. But even sound advice can be heard as negative when a person does not feel understood and accepted. Unsolicited advice is a form of rejection. It tends to communicate, "Your problem is simple. You're just not smart enough to see it. You need to listen to me."
5. **Attack** - Verbal attacks are obviously wrong.

## Foundations for Small Group Leadership

Why do we use door closers?

(It's so important to examine our own hearts and motives. Don't forget your own deep waters.)

- We are already harboring anger or resentment toward the person.
- We feel defensive about what they are saying.
- We are afraid to enter people's problems due to feelings of inadequacy.
- We're struggling with the same problem. We don't want to face it ourselves.
- We're preoccupied with ourselves and just not looking for opportunities.
- We've never seen this modeled.

Here are some techniques from the **Center for Empowerment Coaching** (Life-Coaching):

- Ask "Open-Ended" questions - Probing, Expanding questions

<u>Open-Ended Questions</u>		<u>Close-Ended Questions</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Personal</li><li>● Probing - explore a topic</li><li>● Expanding - pull out more ideas or thoughts from the topic</li></ul>	<p><u>AVOID</u></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Yes/No - no other explanation needed</li><li>● Leading - point you want to make</li><li>● Interpretive - incorrect restatement</li><li>● "Why?" - can be blunt or judgmental</li></ul>

- Reflective Listening (listen without anticipating) - Be patient, don't be thinking too far ahead or thinking of the next question. Listen beneath the words for insights or emotions.

## Foundations for Small Group Leadership

- Acknowledging - Hear what people are saying then respond with understanding and empathy. Be careful not to interject your own stories or examples, this shifts the focus and “hijacks” the conversation.
- Being there - Person feels honored/treasured when we listen as they process new thoughts.
- Asking permission - Shows respect and loving boundaries by asking before interjecting thoughts and opinions. “Unasked for advice, is criticism”

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### CONCLUSION/REVIEW

1. Pursuing your own spiritual friendships
  - a. Why? How does it help us connect with God?
  - b. Has someone pursued you?
  - c. What do you do if you haven't?
    - i. 525, backpack, mentors
2. Understanding how people hide - layers
  - a. Icebergs.
  - b. All people trade on their insecurities.
  - c. Everyone is committed to their own safety.
3. How to connect with people - Building Trust
  - a. Pursuing people is our mission.
  - b. Asking good questions helps us pursue people.
  - c. Listening beneath words.

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NOTES

## WEEK 8 – 10: TELLING YOUR STORY

### SUMMARY

Our self-image shapes leadership. Everything we do (including our leadership), we do according to our self-image. Therefore, the willingness to embrace our own story is a vital first step toward leadership.

Our lives are filled with events that have shape our self-image for good or evil. Spiritual growth, then, involves a willingness to look at those shaping events, an honest appraisal of their impact and a reflection on how we interact with people as a result. The more honest we are about our lives the more we'll agree with the Bible when it states that the enemy has come to kill, steal and destroy (John 10:10). Compared to God's glorious plan, our lives are tragic. Therefore, "understanding our stories" is at the heart of our discipleship.

However, the "telling" of our stories is vitally important. Taking the risk to tell our life's story with others begins to restore our ability to trust. We've all been sinned against and we learn to sin in return. These patterns of relating shape how we view God, others and ourselves; and they destroy our ability to trust. But the Word of God tells us of God's heart for us and his desire for restoration. So redemption is at work when our communities not only accept us (and our stories) but speak the Word of Truth.

### GOALS

1. Understand the value of telling our stories.
2. Understand the outline & begin getting familiar with your own story.
3. Model authenticity.

## CONTENT

### BIG PICTURE



It is common to question the value of telling our stories. After all the past is the past. So why is it important to share the stories of our lives?

What does God think of our stories? God is committed to His glory. All things we created for Him, for His glory. Col 1:15-20. Everything matters to God for His glory. What we are redeemed from - sin/sinned against. What we are made for.

1. How does it help us?
  - a. We can't see beyond the choices we don't understand. What's behind our choices?
  - b. Our self-image drives our behavior. What is our self-image? How was it shaped?
  - c. The world, the flesh and the devil lie to us about who we are and what we're living for. We sin by birth, choice, practice and generational influence.
  - d. How that plays out for each of us is our unique story. Telling our stories help us unravel the influences that have shaped us. It's a process rather than an event.
  - e. The more we reflect on our lives the more we can combat sin/lies with gratitude/truth. Ephesians 3:17 tells us we are either grasping for created things or the Creator. We need power for this.

2. What to include?
  - a. Biographical
  - b. Shaping events
  - c. Impact - what do those events mean? How did they shape us?
  - d. Identification of lies - what have we come to believe about God, others and ourselves?
  - e. False identity - summarize into a word or phrase
  - f. How have lies shaped how we interact with people and think about ourselves?
  - g. Truth - what is the truth about how God sees us?

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NOTES

## WEEK 11: TURNING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

### SUMMARY

Inevitably we'll face challenges that disrupt the Development of Spiritual Friendship. Being able to name challenges is the first step in overcoming them. Having support structures and strategies can help you navigate them well.

Support structures can be as important as good strategies. More times than not, we won't know what to do. A part of our "Personal Preparation" is to know ourselves well enough to know our limitations. In those times having people you have already identified can bring great comfort and guidance. **Don't walk this journey alone.**

The main goal for groups is cohesion. You know you have it when members have a felt sense of "need" for the group. It matters to them. There are many things that can disrupt cohesion. Our strategy as small group leaders is to nurture and protect group cohesion. Think of this as a metaphor. A gardener weeds, waters and builds a fence. Weeds might be anything that gets the group off track, like being out of balance with truth/life continuum. Watering might focus on bringing to the group what you've tasted of community, like experiencing acceptance in the face of our brokenness. The fence creates healthy boundaries and safe places, like having a good covenant.

### GOALS

1. Identify common challenges
2. Develop the value of support structures and strategies

### CONTENT

The reality of going deep is we **will** face challenges! The 1st Rule of dealing with difficulties and challenges...don't be one!

As we said in our summary, our goal is "Group Cohesion". This is the "get to" vs. "have to"; desire vs. duty. People want to be there and adjust their schedules around group night rather than the other way around. This may not happen for everyone at the same time, but you will know when it happens.

What's at stake? What if we don't reach "cohesion", what's the price?  
*Our group...*

There will be obstacles to impede the growth and deepening of our groups. Sometimes they are circumstantial. (e.g. sick kids, flat tire, no babysitter, etc.) In some cases, it can be the people themselves.

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### TWO ROLES OF SMALL GROUP LEADERS

1. **The Gardener:** The gardener doesn't make the plants grow. They make sure the garden is prepared so a plant can grow. They plant the seed, water the plants and ensure the sun can shine on the plants. In the same way, we do this for our groups. We create a safe and trusting place, encourage and celebrate with our members and pray that God will work in every person's life. The gardener also works to protect the garden from weeds and animals. They remove the weeds and put up fences to keep the animals out. We also protect our groups by ensuring members are not dominating or giving advice. We set up healthy boundaries by utilizing our covenant.
2. **The Traffic Cop:** As facilitators, we help direct the conversation; much like a cop directs traffic. How? A whistle and "STOP" sign might be nice but that's not exactly what we're talking about. We need to hold off some and tell others to enter the "intersection". This can be hard because we think we are being mean. On the contrary, we are protecting the dynamic of the whole group.

# Foundations for Small Group Leadership

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## OUR HEART AND MOTIVES

Now comes the crucial component... We must check our hearts and we must beg God for help to clean up our motives. In our own flesh and mind, we will not be thinking of others as we engage in these challenges.

How do we do this then? We turn to the source of perfect love and truth, the Word of God.

Read these passages: Ezekiel 3:10-11(NLT); Ephesians 4:31-32 (NLT); Matthew 7:1-5 (NLT)

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## EVERYONE HAS A STORY

Always think “stories”! We all have a story. Understanding our own stories is very important as we step into the challenges of our groups. Why? The better we know our stories and seek healing from our Father, the better equipped we will be to be used by Him. This will also help us to empathize and love others.

Hurt people, hurt people...or help people.

Remember, we do everything according to our self-image.

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## FOUR COMMON BROKEN PERSONALITIES

1. **Extreme Neediness** - Patterns of chronic problems and crisis, not just once in a while. Their needs and problems dominate the group week after week. The group offers help or feedback but they never do it. They keep complaining.
2. **Extreme Passivity (Silent Member)** - Growth cannot occur by never taking risks to speak. Fear and/or anger instead of love controls them. Silence is never silent; it is behavior and has meaning. Usually self-condemning, masochistic. Lives with extreme fear, insecurity and distrust of what others will do or say if they were to speak up. They are very confused about the difference between assertiveness and aggression.

## Foundations for Small Group Leadership

3. **The Monopolizer (dominates by talking too much)** - This may be the leader. Learn to be comfortable with silence and let the group work. Draw group members into the intersection by asking for their thoughts or reactions to different people and discussions. At first, the group is welcoming and encouraging the monopolizer but in time the group members become frustrated and angry. Excessive talking is the person's way of dealing with anxiety. As the group's frustration grows, so does the person's anxiety and talking.
4. **Super spiritual (fixing and advising everyone, moralizer)** - They give pat answers designed to shut down the process. They refuse to admit error or mistakes. They need to be right and prove others wrong. They are judgmental. They never struggle. They seem unconcerned about being liked. They just need to be right. The person doesn't know what to do with the hurting person so they just slap a Band-Aid on them to shut them up and to avoid their sense of inadequacy. This way of relating hides feelings of shame, failure and anger.

Where do you see yourself? Again, it's helpful to know ourselves and in which direction we might lean.

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### SUPPORT STRUCTURES

Remember this is not up to us. We will not mature people; we will not change people. That part is up to God. We make ourselves available to be used by the Holy Spirit.

It's also good to remember we're not alone. Please remember to not isolate yourselves. Reach out for help. Here are a couple of options:

- Co-Leaders
- Gary Heim
- Dan, Ron, Matt and Kathryn

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NOTES

### WEEK 12: RESOLVING CONFLICT

#### SUMMARY

True community is about trust, creating a place where we're safe enough to be known. This kind of community can help us restore that trust and believe the truth of our identity in Christ. However, unresolved conflict is a threat to this community. In this lesson we will discuss God's redemptive pattern for resolving offenses and conflict.

We tend to deal with conflict passively (avoid it) or aggressively. In groups you may likely deal with communication problems, people withdrawing and displays of anger. The quality of any relationship (small group) is revealed in how it handles conflict. Think of the metaphor of the gardener. When you plant seeds, water and weed, you naturally want to see fruit. Your desire to love well won't let conflict (weeds) destroy what good has occurred in the group process.

#### GOALS

1. Understand the value of intentionally protecting True Community where we feel safe, know others and are known and where we are accepted, loved and respected.
2. Understand how conflict threatens True Community.
3. Learn how to navigate conflict resolution redemptively.

## CONTENT

### The Value of Conflict Resolution:

- It is redemptive.
- It is commanded. Matthew 18: 15-17 (NRSV) – "If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault **when the two of you are alone.** ...If you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you" 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 – "Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church!" Matthew 7:3-5 – "Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?"
- It creates unity therefore it is necessary to have powerful evangelistic witness. They will know we are Christians by our love. Christ prayed for unity in John 15. Nothing is more repulsive to the unbelieving world than fighting Christians.
- It puts to the test whether we are willing to trust Christ for our security and significance. John 13:34; 14:15 and 17:20-23.
- It is given biblical priority over public worship. Matthew 5:23-25 tells us to, "...leave your gift at the altar..." It is better to make peace with someone than to worship God in the middle of relational brokenness. It focuses on the real cause of conflict i.e. pride, selfishness, greed and defending our rights instead of forgiving.

James 4: "What causes quarrels among you? ... You desire something but don't get it. You kill and covet..."

- It preserves relationships and promotes long lasting friendships, marriages etc.

### Step by Step Process of Matthew 18 Explained:

1. Note the offense
  - a. This requires honesty and clarity. Be honest and admit you have been offended. Also, be honest and admit you may have offended someone else.
  - b. Note: if I can remove the offense from my mind...fine, end of story. Proverbs 19:11 "A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is his glory to overlook, an offense." Be honest here...if offense does not go away, if I cannot be open with the offender etc. I must reevaluate and return to Matthew 18 process.
  
2. Accept responsibility for resolving conflict
  - a. Recognize that you have the responsibility and the privilege to participate with the heart of God:  
Matthew 5:23,24
  
3. Take Out the Log
  - a. Honestly examine your own heart. Invite God to search your heart. Psalm 139 "Search me, "O Lord and know my heart."  
(“It’s a terrible thing to be right...only.”- Louie)
  - b. Examine any way I have contributed to the dispute. Have I responded poorly (either outwardly or inwardly)? Are there any wrong actions or words I have spoken that I need to ask forgiveness of first. Be willing to be "small". I need not demand anything. My security and significance are in Christ, therefore, I do not need you to see what you've done even though desire this deeply for your sake and God's sake.  
  
Matthew 7: 4,5 "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

### 4. Go In Private

- a. In love and with full self-examination go directly to the offending person first. (Exception to this step is wise and even required by law in situations. e.g. sexual abuse, child abuse and sexual harassment. These cases should be properly reported and addressed through step 1 "Note the Offense" above, of Matthew 18.)
- b. To go to others will require extensive cleanup, confession of wrong to the third party you talked to. Ask third party not to talk to anyone else; also ask if they already have...if so, further cleanup will then be necessary.

### 5. Go and Show Your Brother His Fault

- a. You will block God's redemptive work if you speak without love, without self-examination.
- b. This act of love requires thoughtful reflection and perhaps practice with a facilitator. Word choices are crucial to get beyond defensiveness.  
See examples below:

Harsh - "What you said in group really offended me and I'm here to talk to you about it."

Soft - "I'm here to talk to you today because I value you and I desire for our relationship to grow. Because of my commitment to you I want to talk to you today. First of all I want to say that I must confess I was pretty shut down in my response to you last week, and, I was wrong." (Talk this through and then proceed to offense).

### 6. Second Attempt (unnecessary if offender hears, repents and reconciliation has occurred)

Go to the offending person the second time with one or two witnesses and then proceed to follow all the steps outlined above. (See "A Blueprint for Guided Mediation." below)

## Foundations for Small Group Leadership

Note: Several points need to be examined by a leader to be sure the Matthew 18 redemption process was embraced:

1. Was the offense acknowledged?
  - a. Could the offense have been forgiven and both parties move on in peace?
  - b. Did the offense cause a rupture in community?
2. Was the initiative taken?
  - a. Was there stewing and venting only, or, did the redemptive steps of Matthew occur?
  - b. Was the offense addressed or was the offender maligned in confrontation?
3. Was the communication direct?
  - a. Did any 3rd parties get involved inappropriately? If so, clean up must occur.
  - b. Was the confrontation in a group setting or in a one to one setting?
4. Was the communication truth and love?
  - a. Was offense clearly stated?
  - b. Was the communication grace filled: word choices, tone etc.?
  - c. Was the "confronter" really for the other person, or just trying to straighten the record?

**A Blueprint for Mediated Confrontation** (one to one confrontation has failed)

1. Advanced Personal Preparation (for confronter and mediator)
  - a. Bring a clean heart
  - b. Confronter - Am I bringing baggage to the meeting? ("I just don't like this person.", "Group is not going well for me and this is the last straw!")?
  - c. Mediator - Am I biased? Do I favor one of the two parties?

## Foundations for Small Group Leadership

2. Open with prayer/devotion (strongly encouraged)
  - a. Rom. 14:19 "...make every effort toward peace."
  - b. Rom. 15:5-7 "...spirit of unity."
  - c. Phil. 2 and Eph. 4 "...spirit of humility."
  - d. Do I just get frustrated because the two parties are not reconciling? Do I carry a vision for what God's Spirit wants to do in each person's life/my own life through this conflict?
  
3. Cover ground rules with both parties
  - a. No one is allowed to interrupt.
  - b. The facilitator is willing and given the authority to conduct the meeting.
  - c. We agree not to discuss this matter with people who are not part of the problem.

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NOTES

### WEEK 13: ENDING WELL

#### SUMMARY

This lesson of "Ending Well" is about balancing our group's needs with the needs of the larger church community. There is a tendency to either keep going too long (Linger) or end prematurely (Fizzle). It comes down to "Always Making Disciples". Are you making disciples? It's not just about what we can get; it's about what we can give. Groups that stay together too long may be focusing on their own comfort at the exclusion of other's discipleship. The more successful your group is the stronger the pull to Linger. On the other hand if our groups end too soon we probably aren't achieving our goals.

#### GOALS

1. Recognize when the group is ready to end.
2. Understand the balance of one's small group and the church body's needs.
3. How to communicate to group and church leadership.

### CONTENT

1. How do we know when our group is ready to end? (Linger/Fizzle)
  - a. What was your covenant's vision in regard to duration and objectives?
  - b. What has changed since your group began? For example, do some members need special attention, or are they in crisis?
  - c. How will each group member be impacted by ending?
  - d. Have we helped our group members understand and trust others with their own stories?
  - e. Can the group multiply? Is there an apprentice leader or possible co leader if the group multiplies?
  
2. Refer to your covenant frequently. Is your covenant still relevant?
  - a. What is the duration that you agreed to?
  - b. What were the objectives/vision?
  - c. There are two common results when a covenant is no longer relevant.
    - i. Linger - Everyone loves the group but we don't know why and we don't know where we're going.
    - ii. Fizzle - Not everyone loves the group but we don't know why and we don't know where we're going.

### 3. Fizzle

- a. Your group most likely has low trust if you're fizzling.
- b. Are we quitting because we're in the pain stage? Are we quitting because the people in the group are too difficult?
- c. What to do?
  - i. Discuss with Gary when or if you don't want to lead any longer. It's easy to lose sight of what is best for group members. Any church leader would want to know what's going on before it's too late. Every small group leader has been here and knows what you're going through.
  - ii. If you no longer can lead, discuss with each member their plans for community. The point of community is care. Try to end your leadership well. Let Gary know of any potential leaders.
  - iii. If you desire for the group to continue, discuss with the group or each individual to determine how to move forward. The point here is buy in. What are the barriers for each member?

### 4. Linger

- a. Challenge and clarify your group's purpose. Revisit your covenant.
  - i. Why are we meeting? Are we growing? Are we "Always Making Disciples"? How?
- b. Cast a vision for multiplying into another group. Birth a new group by developing an apprentice leader. How can our group help more people at Blythefield be in community?

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