

EMMAUS ROAD CHURCH DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLE GUIDE



HEAR AND OBEY. REPENT AND BELIEVE. PLAN AND PRAY.



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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide was developed to help equip our Discipleship Huddles to be more effective in discipling and caring for one another. We all desire to care for each other, but sometimes we lack the skills necessary to lead one another to Jesus on a consistent basis. While a Discipleship Huddle may experience significant times of repentance and renewed faith in Jesus, at other times that same Huddle may have trouble getting past the question, "How was your week?"

This guide is designed to help equip every person who is committed to a Discipleship Huddle in the basics of one-another care. It explains the three steps every Discipleship Huddle should walk through each time they meet: Hear and Obey, Repent and Believe, Plan and Pray.

The appendix section contains a bunch of practical discipleship tools and resources that can be used in any personal ministry context (e.g., Huddle, MC, marriage counseling, etc.). *Reference these appendices over and over again as discipleship and biblical counseling needs arise.*

Ideally, each Huddle member will become familiar with the content of this guide. Our Huddle relationships are a very important aspect of our growth as disciples, and the time it takes to read this guide is a small investment compared with the potential payoff in the lives of each person in the group. The group might want to walk through the guide together, then refer to the guide repeatedly as they learn how to practice these habits together. The leader may want to bring a copy to the weekly meetings. However you use it, this guide exists to help everyone grow in their ability to disciple and counsel others.

May the Holy Spirit use this resource to glorify Jesus in our hearts by leading us to repentance and renewed faith in him.

OVERVIEW OF DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLES

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." — Matthew 28:18–20

WHAT IS A DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLE?

The term "Discipleship Huddle" refers to a group that ideally consists of three people—men with men, women with women—who meet together weekly. They seek know one another deeply enough to bring the gospel to bear on each other's lives so that they grow to become more like Jesus.

DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLE FORMATION

- Have each person share a 10-15 minute version of their own personal story. Use *Telling Your Story with Jesus as the Hero* (Appendix 1) as a tool to help you prepare.
- *One-Another Care: Listen for the Heart, Part 1* (Appendix 2) will help equip group members to listen attentively as stories are being shared.

THE HABITS OF A HUDDLE

James K. A. Smith defines a liturgy as *a love-shaping, habit-forming practice that aims our heart's desires in a certain direction*. As Huddles engage in specific "habit-forming practices" week after week, we trust that these habits will shape and aim the desires of our hearts toward the glory of God.

The three habits that we ask all Huddles to practice roughly follow the pattern of Isaiah's encounter with God in Isaiah 6. First, Isaiah beheld the holiness and glory of God (vv. 1-4). Then Isaiah was convicted of his own sin and cried out in repentance (v. 5), and God removed his guilt and atoned for his sin (v. 7). Finally, Isaiah was commissioned and sent out (vv. 8-9).

HEAR & OBEY

- We behold the holiness and glory of God through his word.
- Both before and during the meeting, study the sermon text from the previous Sunday together, and ask the 4 Questions (see Appendix 3).

REPENT & BELIEVE

- Our response to God always involves repentance (turning away from idols and unbelief) and faith (turning toward all that God is for us in Jesus).

- Listen for the heart (see Appendices 2 and 4) as each person shares attitudes of unbelief and areas of sin.
- Ask good questions, utilizing the 4 Questions to help you go from Fruit to Root (Appendix 8).
- Speak the truth in love as the Spirit leads you, calling each person to repent of sin and believe in the gospel. See Appendices 7, 10, 11 and 12 for more resources.

PLAN & PRAY

- After hearing from God and responding to him in repentance and faith, we are commissioned to share the gospel with others.
- Listen to the Spirit together and obey as he calls you to bear fruit in keeping with repentance.
- Pay attention to what he might call you to do and who he might call you to tell.
- Make specific plans to share the truth with others and pray for friends who don't yet know Jesus. See Appendix 9 for resources.

A WORD ABOUT MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES

We believe that missional communities (MCs) are the primary organizing structure for pastoral care, discipleship, and mission in the church. Disciples are made most effectively on mission, in community, and through life-on-life interactions. Therefore, as a church family we focus primarily on the health and growth of our MCs.

Jesus calls all of his followers to be radically committed to him (Matthew 16:24-26). We believe that commitment to Jesus includes commitment to his bride, the church. As a church family, we express our commitment to Jesus and his bride through involvement in Sunday gatherings (gather), a Missional Community (scatter), and a Discipleship Huddle (grow), all of which provide ample opportunities to steward the gifts and talents God has given us (give).

DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLE FAQs

WHAT IS A DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLE?

The term “Discipleship Huddle” refers to a group that ideally consists of three people—men with men, women with women—who meet together weekly. Discipleship Huddles provide a structure for us to care deeply for one another and to foster growth as disciples of Jesus.

Huddles are the context where members of Emmaus Road Church intentionally participate in the work of ministry described in Ephesians 4:13, “Building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Huddles are not the only time and place for personal ministry, but they are one way our church seeks to be intentional about speaking the truth to one another in love (Eph. 4:15).

We pray that your Discipleship Huddle will be a major factor in your growth as a disciple (i.e., someone who is learning to apply the gospel to absolutely every part of life).

WHY SHOULD I BE IN A DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLE?

As disciples who’ve been saved and made righteous, Paul exhorts us to “be transformed by the renewing of your minds” (Romans 12:2). Discipleship requires life-on-life interaction, and can only happen in community. We grow primarily through the experience of life in gospel community. A Discipleship Huddle can be a key catalyst for growth and transformation in our lives.

One of the main ways this happens is by giving each other regular reminders of the truth of the gospel. Hebrews 3:12 warns, “Take care, brothers and sisters, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.” We are often tempted to forget who God is, what He’s done for us in Christ Jesus, who we are as a result, and how we live out of our new identity. Hebrews 3:13 says one of the major ways to prevent this “falling away from the living God” is to “encourage one another daily ... so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

Every single day we need to be encouraged with the truth that we are deeply loved and accepted by the Father *purely* on the basis of what Jesus has done. Our new identity as sons and daughters of God shapes everything about our life as disciples of Jesus. Understanding this new identity also gives us the boldness and humility to be honest with our Huddle partners when we are tempted to hide our sin or to blame others. Regular encouragement from our Huddle partners can be a significant help in our battle against sin and against the lies of the enemy.

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF A DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLE?

The overall goal of a Discipleship Huddle is to foster discipleship relationships that help each person grow to become more like Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. The goal is not merely to hang out and have fun, or even to build friendships, though hopefully all of that will happen. The goal is to care for one another as we “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

As disciples, we should experience transformation at every level, affecting our whole person: head, heart, and hands. The specific discipleship goals for a Discipleship Huddle meeting can be understood by unpacking the three habits.

- **Hear and Obey:** Helped by the Holy Spirit, the group will study the Bible, seeking to understand, trust, and obey all that God says.
- **Repent and Believe:** Led by the Holy Spirit, the group will repent of sin and believe in the gospel.
- **Plan and Pray:** Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the group will identify opportunities to live as witnesses.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM A DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLE?

The members of a Discipleship Huddle should be committed to meeting together regularly, usually for about 90 minutes. These meetings consist of sharing personal stories and struggles, asking questions, listening to each other, reading scripture, praying, speaking the truth in love, repenting and confessing sin, listening to the Holy Spirit, and submitting to one another. Beyond the weekly meeting, however, Discipleship Huddles should seek to build trusting relationships by sharing everyday life together.

THE STRUCTURE OF A DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLE

HOW MANY SHOULD BE IN A DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLE?

Discipleship methods have often employed a one-on-one approach. While this is certainly in line with many apprenticeship models, from which we can glean a lot about how to train someone along the way, it does not appear to be the method Jesus utilized. We rarely, if ever, find him with only one of his disciples. In our experience as a church family, we have found that three is the ideal size for a Discipleship Huddle.

If you are accustomed to one-on-one meetings, there are a number of reasons to add a third person:

- A more dynamic group exchange occurs.
- It is much more difficult for one person to dominate the conversation.
- There are two sets of ears filtering everything that is said, providing two unique perspectives in response.
- There's a much greater potential for learning and development. Each person is unique and brings so much to the table.
- There are two people loving and supporting each person in the group. No one is bearing another's burdens alone.

On the other hand, if you are accustomed to small groups of 4-8, there are a number of reasons to limit it to three:

- Each person can contribute significantly to the group.
- No one can "hide" or remain silent for very long before someone asks, "What do you think?"
- Each person has an ample opportunity to share at each group meeting.
- Scheduled group meetings don't last multiple hours.

Though three is the ideal size, circumstances will sometimes dictate that a group be larger than three. Schedule conflicts or a lack of qualified leaders can lead to groups of 4, 5, and even 6 meeting together for a time. While not ideal, these options are better than only two people meeting on a consistent basis. When a Huddle has 6 committed people, it might be time to multiply into two Huddles.

WHO SHOULD THE DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLE CONSIST OF?

We often describe an MC as "a gospel community on mission." While MCs seek to live in community, the reality is that the level of intimacy with the people in our MCs will vary. As a result, it is helpful for our Discipleship Huddle to consist of people from

the same MC. This will help ensure another regular touch point with some of the people in your MC outside of the weekly MC gathering. It will also allow you to share your heart and your life with a few of the people with whom you are on mission. When Discipleship Huddles are made up of people from the same MC, it greatly strengthens the MC and helps advance the mission of making disciples who make disciples.

There will be times when a Discipleship Huddle will not be made up of men or women in the same MC. An MC may have recently multiplied, and perhaps the Discipleship Huddle wants to wait before transitioning. Sometimes people have longstanding relationships they really value, or they want to continue pouring into particular discipleship relationships before entrusting them to someone else. The keys are to follow the Spirit's leading and to keep in mind the goal of growing as disciples. If people are not being challenged and transformed, it is almost certainly time for a change.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD A DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLE MEET? AND WHERE?

First of all, since the Discipleship Huddle is a subset of an MC, Discipleship Huddles should connect on more than just a formal basis. Discipleship Huddles should be engaged in as much everyday life as possible. Ideally, gospel friendships will form, and people will enjoy hanging out together in all kinds of ways.

As far as a more structured meeting, Discipleship Huddles should plan to meet on a weekly basis for about 90 minutes (though often they go longer). If a group only plans to connect every other week, the busyness and unpredictability of life (travel, sickness, holidays, schedule conflicts) will often mean long stretches between solid meetings.

Meetings usually happen in coffee shops, restaurants, pubs, or homes. Focus is a key factor to consider: it's hard for three moms to have a Discipleship Huddle meeting while their kids play at the park or for three commuters to talk on a crowded bus. Meet in a place where everyone is comfortable and reasonably free of distractions.

DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLE LEADERSHIP

The nature of group dynamics reveals that every group has a leader. Acknowledging this reality will help Discipleship Huddles function in a healthier manner.

Each Discipleship Huddle's make-up will be unique. The nature of the group will determine the type of leadership that's needed. For some groups, where all participants have similar experience and maturity, the leader will simply be the person who makes sure the group meets. For others, the leader will clearly drive the discussion. Sometimes, the leader will essentially form the group by inviting everyone together, and other times the group will need to work together to clearly identify the leader.

Regardless of who initially plays the role of leader, each member of a Discipleship Huddle should gain experience leading within the group. Ideally, over the course of a year or so, each person will spend a few months leading the group. As disciples, each person should be equipped to guide a group of at least three people through a discussion that is centered around Jesus. A Discipleship Huddle provides great training ground for disciples to learn the basics of one-another care and leadership in a group setting.

Each MC will have a shepherding leader who will provide counsel and consultation for the Huddle's under their care. This MC shepherd could be the MC leader or another person in the MC.

A note for MC Leaders: the investment you make in your Discipleship Huddle is the most strategic discipleship investment you will make. Be prayerful and very intentional about who you invite into your Discipleship Huddle and how you use your time together.

DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLE GROWTH, MULTIPLICATION, AND TRANSITION

A Discipleship Huddle should be more than a once a week meeting. The members of the group should share everyday life together. Hopefully, relationships will form that “stir up one another to love and good works” (Hebrews 10:24). All Huddle members should experience intimacy with each other, and some may even find friendships that continue long after they have transitioned into another Huddle.

Occasionally, Discipleship Huddles may stay together for a few years. Others may sense that, after a significant time of growth, God is leading them to make strategic discipleship investments in other people, that they need to “multiply” their efforts as a group. Still others will be forced to navigate the inevitable changes that life throws their way—people losing interest, people moving away, MC multiplication—with grace and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The bottom line is that there is no formula for growth and multiplication of a Huddle. Relationships are beautifully complex and must be handled with care and sensitivity. Every situation is different, and the group members must be willing to submit to the Spirit's leading. The members of a Discipleship Huddle should enter the relationship expecting long-term commitment to one another, even if the exact nature of the relationship changes over time.

DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLE FORMATION

The formative stage of a Discipleship Huddle is very important. The first few meetings will set the stage for how the group will interact in the future.

Plan time for each member of the group to share a 10-15 minute version of their own personal story. *Telling Your Story with Jesus as the Hero* (Appendix 1) is a great tool to help each person prepare to share their story in a way that highlights the work of Jesus throughout their life.

As each member of the group shares their story, the other Huddle members will listen. But they won't just listen for the sake of showing empathy and compassion, though that is vitally important. Each person will listen closely to what is said because "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). The members of a Discipleship Huddle will regularly listen for the heart.

Listening to a person's story is kind of like examining a fruit tree. Jesus said you will know a tree by its fruit. Typically, a person's story will clearly reveal some of the fruit that is hanging on their tree (e.g., financial difficulty, sexual sin, marital conflict, anger, etc.). But the real action is under the surface, in the root structure of the tree. According to Jesus, actions and words reveal the heart (Matthew 15:17-20). And the heart is of primary importance because the heart is the seat of faith. "With the heart a person believes" (Romans 10:10).

A person's story has the potential to reveal where they have exercised faith in Jesus (gospel alignment), as well as where they have replaced Jesus as the only right object of faith (gospel distortion). Jesus is the only one who can save, and we regularly look to created things instead. These false saviors will often be revealed in our stories.

Learning to listen for the heart will be a major focus of the Repent and Believe step in the Huddle process. Praying and asking the Spirit to give the group ears to hear is essential. Additionally, use *One-Another Care: Listen for the Heart, Part 1* (Appendix 2) as a tool to help equip each Huddle member to listen for the heart in this formative stage when personal stories are being shared.

It may take 2-3 meetings to allow time for each person to share their story. Take the time to lay a solid foundation. Gain a clear understanding of how Jesus is the hero of each person's story, and of the areas where they are still struggling to believe the gospel. These struggles will undoubtedly resurface over and over again as the group moves forward together.

THE HABITS OF A DISCIPLESHIP HUDDLE

At each meeting, a Discipleship Huddle should walk through the three steps of Hear and Obey, Repent and Believe, and Plan and Pray. Each of these can only be done with the help of the Holy Spirit, so praying throughout the process is imperative.

HEAR AND OBEY

Led by the Holy Spirit, the group will study the Bible and ask the 4 Questions. The goal is to understand the meaning of the word (Hear) and to be transformed by the significance of the word (Obey) so that each person either *learns* or is *reminded* of the truth about who God is, what he has done, who we are, and how we live, every time the Discipleship Huddle meets.

In John 8:31-32, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." This step is about uncovering the vital truth about who God is, what he has done, who we are, and how we should live.

There are a number of Jesus' statements from John's gospel that highlight the importance of his word and his Spirit in helping a disciple discover truth:

- Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17).
- "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26).
- "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (John 16:13-14).

Jesus' death on the cross makes it possible for the Holy Spirit to live in us. And his Spirit is our teacher, the one who makes Jesus even more real to us as we grow in our faith. Our motivation to Hear and Obey comes from the great gift Jesus has given us and from our desire to know him more. Hear and Obey is not merely about information, but about relationship and transformation.

In light of Jesus' prayer in John 17:17, studying the Bible should be the primary way Discipleship Huddles learn together. We encourage our Huddles to focus on the text of Scripture that was preached the previous Sunday. Each person should utilize the 4 Questions as they read and study the passage on their own. Consider using a journal to capture key thoughts and insights that the Spirit brings to mind. Group members should come to the weekly meeting ready to answer these two questions:

1. What is the Spirit of God saying through this text? (Hear)
2. What is the Spirit of God calling you to do in response to this text? (Obey)

When the group meets, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to speak through his word. Read through the passage once or twice together before working through the 4 Questions. Share any insights from the week and write down new things the Spirit illuminates.

For more on how to use the 4 Questions as a Bible study tool, see Appendix 3, *Hear and Obey*.

By studying and asking the 4 Questions independently and as a group, the Hear and Obey step in the process has the potential to significantly increase the group's biblical literacy. Starting with God's Story is a must, as it gives us the whole picture and helps us understand each individual part. But moving on to an intimate knowledge of God's whole story is vital. As Jesus explained on the Emmaus Road, he himself shows up on every page in Scripture (Luke 24:27), either in shadow or in fullness (Colossians 2:17), and our love for him grows as our understanding of his story grows.

REPENT AND BELIEVE

Led by the Holy Spirit, the group will repent of sin and believe in the gospel. The goal is to shepherd the heart so that each person is brought to repentance and renewed faith every time a Discipleship Huddle meets.

Repent and Believe primarily involves discipling the heart. The word heart is used over 850 times in the Bible and is used to describe the very center of our being. It includes our mind, our emotions, and our will. And in Romans 10:10, Paul says it's the part of us that exercises faith, or belief. "For with the heart a person believes..."

In Luke 6, Jesus says the fruit of a person's life—their words and their actions—are an indicator of what is present in their heart. "Each tree is known by its own fruit ... out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." (Luke 6:44-45) So regardless of what we know in our heads, the fruit of our lives is determined by what we believe in our hearts. We may know God is great and in control, we may affirm his sovereignty and power, and yet we worry. What we know does not align with what we believe in that moment.

When we worry, we're placing our hope in something other than God. We're believing that something other than him is in control and can give us security. Paul's assessment of this misplaced belief is that we've "exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Romans 1:25). By placing our faith in something other than God to give us what only he can give, we are actually engaging in false worship, in idolatry.

Discipleship Huddles are designed to help identify these areas of sin and idolatry in our lives. Repent and Believe is about ensuring what we know aligns with what we believe.

It is possible to be overzealous in our desire to root sin out of one another's lives. *Repent and Believe is not a witch-hunt or a game of "whack-a-mole," where we wait anxiously with a big mallet, smacking down every little indicator of sin and unbelief as it*

pops up in people's lives. In reality, we should be even more quick to point out evidences of grace than we are to call out sin or to start poking around, looking for evidence of unbelief.

However, the fundamental assumption is that within a week's time every believer is going to sin, and therefore need to...

- Confess sins to one another (James 5:16)
- Repent before God (Revelation 3:19)
- Turn back towards Jesus in faith (Hebrews 12:1-2)
- Experience the ongoing forgiveness and cleansing of Jesus (1 John 1:9)
- Observe the fruit of the Spirit being produced as a result (Galatians 5:16-25)

REPENT AND BELIEVE AND ONE-ANOTHER CARE

Even in our most broken circumstances, the gospel addresses every challenge we are facing. Jesus has designed his church in such a way that we can offer comfort and help to one another in the midst of our pain and struggle. While Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, and the Holy Spirit has appointed elders to shepherd the flock, every believer can be equipped to care for and build up others.

Ephesians 4:11-12 says, "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."

Gifted shepherds have not been given to the church to do all of the ministry, but to equip the saints for one-another care. The Holy Spirit lives in each disciple of Jesus, empowering them to love one another, pray for one another, serve one another, bear one another's burdens, and speak the truth to one another in love. And 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." We care for one another because God first cared us.

We have developed and implemented a shepherding structure that helps provide care at multiple levels, depending on the need. Every shepherding need is addressed primarily in the context of an MC and a Discipleship Huddle, and these people are never left behind if the process involves more experienced counselors or elders.

We call this approach One-Another Care. Our goal is that shepherds at every level (Huddle leaders, MC leaders, and elders) will be trained to listen for the heart (Appendices 2 and 4), ask good questions (Appendix 5), and speak the truth in love (Appendix 7). The Repent and Believe step in the Huddle process is essentially an introduction to the practice of One-Another Care.

LISTEN FOR THE HEART

"Huddle Group Formation" introduced us to the importance of listening for the heart as a person shares the story of their day or the story of their life. The fruit of our lives is evident, and reveals a great deal about our hearts.

At each Huddle meeting, as a part of the Repent and Believe step in the process, group members will share some of what's going on in their lives. They may have experienced victory over temptation, the Spirit may have convicted them and led them to repentance and faith, they may have struggled with sin/unbelief in the past week.

As the members of the group are talking, everyone should listen for the heart. This begins with praying and asking the Spirit to give the group ears to hear what is really happening under the surface.

More importantly, ask the Spirit to help the group show empathy and compassion by simply paying close attention. Nothing affects nurturing more than showing genuine care and concern for others, especially when they are hurting. Trust is built when Huddle members demonstrate mutual love for one another. Without love, compassion, empathy, and care, groups cannot nurture one another.

Listening for the heart also means focusing on the person and not the problem. Regarding the importance of listening as an act of love, Paul Tripp says, "We can focus on the problem and miss the person in the middle of it. Biblical personal ministry certainly includes problem solving, but it must be person-focused. God's work of change certainly involves changes in situation and relationship, but it has radical personal transformation as its core goal" (*Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, p. 126). He goes on to say that *rather than listening for the facts about a person's circumstances or situation, we should listen for how they are responding to their circumstances*.

See Appendix 4, *One-Another Care: Listen for the Heart, Part 2*, for a list of nine types of words or statements to listen for as others share.

ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

How did God respond to Adam and Eve immediately after they sinned and hid? How did he respond to Cain after he was angry at Abel because his sacrifice had been rejected? How does Jesus often engage both the Pharisees and his disciples?

With questions!

When people share their struggles with us, the temptation is to offer simplistic advice or quote scripture in a moralistic manner. We want to help fix people's problems. Responding with questions is another way to reinforce the value of the person over the problem: "I care about you, not just about fixing your problem."

We've all experienced well-intentioned advice givers offering simplistic answers and quick fixes. Usually, these words bounce right off our hearts. Questions are so valuable because they lead to self-discovery and implication. In order for real

change to occur, the Holy Spirit must bring conviction of sin (John 16:8). Responding to a person's story with immediate and direct proclamations often fails to produce the fruit of repentance. Depend on the Holy Spirit and listen as he provides good questions that can help nurture the heart of another person.

Asking good questions is also essential to knowing each other deeply enough to identify where the gospel is most needed. When someone in the group shares that he has been "struggling to show patience toward his kids," it may be tempting for the rest of the group to leave it at that, share a verse or two, and pray. Don't be afraid to ask for more information! "Struggling to show patience" could mean huffing and puffing around the house, or it could involve punching holes in the wall. *Whenever you're not yet sure how the gospel applies, ask more questions.*

See Appendix 5, *One-Another Care: Ask Good Questions*, for more.

Also, check out Appendix 6, *X-Ray Questions*, by David Powlison, for a list of 34 excellent questions that get at the heart.

SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE

As we disciple and nurture each other, we will need to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15, 25). This truth should be centered on our identity much more than on our actions. Avoid simple advice or quoting scripture in a way that is unhelpful. *If a Huddle member confesses worry, it probably won't help to remind them that Jesus said, "Do not worry" three times in Matthew 6.* Rather, focus on their identity as a beloved child of the Father (which Jesus mentions 10 times in Matthew 6) who can rest because of his perfect love, care, and provision for them.

Again, the leadership of the Holy Spirit is essential. Pray and ask the Spirit to speak through the group. Ask him to produce the fruit of love in each person so that truthful words are presented with care and grace.

1 Corinthians 4:5 warns, "Do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes (NASB, "motives") of the heart." If we have preconceived judgments about a person's heart ("I know for sure why they did that!"), that will come through in our communication, and our speech will not be filled with grace. We need the Holy Spirit to purify our motives before we speak.

It's important to ask a lot of good questions before speaking the truth in love. A rule of thumb we often employ is to ask 10 questions for every pronouncement. And often it's helpful to ask permission before making a pronouncement: "Can I tell you what I'm seeing?" This ensures that the person is open and ready to receive a direct word. However, the Spirit will sometimes prompt very direct communication, even in the context of one-another care. As long as the Spirit is prompting it, and it is spoken in love, we need to be obedient to say what the Spirit is leading us to say.

Finally, one way we often speak the truth in love is by calling people to repentance. Often, we have to ask, "Is there anything that would prevent you from repenting right now?" or "Are you willing to talk to the Father about this right now?" This simple but

direct question can help people cross the threshold of repentance and renewed faith in the gospel.

All of this content can also be found in Appendix 7, *One-Another Care: Speak the Truth in Love*.

See also...

- Appendix 8, *Fruit to Root*
- Appendix 10, *The Functional Centrality of the Gospel*, by Mike Bullmore
- Appendix 11, *Four Liberating Truths*, by Tim Chester and Steve Timmis
- Appendix 12, *Identifying Your Idols*, by Tim Keller

PLAN AND PRAY

Led by the Holy Spirit, the group will prayerfully plan to live as Spirit-empowered witnesses, telling others about the good news. The goal is to experience the active presence and power of God leading each person to know what to do and who to tell every time the group meets.

Once we've discovered the truth about who God is and what He's done, and once we've repented of our sin and renewed our faith in Jesus, we need to ask the Spirit to guide us in changing the way we live. Our repentance must have some practical impact on our lives.

When John the Baptist was baptizing people, preparing them for the arrival of the Messiah, he exhorted them to "bear fruit in keeping with repentance," meaning, "demonstrate through your life that your repentance is legitimate."

This was a part of Paul's message as well. As he was telling the story of his conversion to King Agrippa, Paul said, "...[I] declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance" (Acts 26:20).

Legalism has left a bad taste in the mouths of so many followers of Jesus that talk of works and actions can sometimes be dismissed. While the "you-are-what-you-do" mindset has certainly caused a great deal of damage in the church, the New Testament clearly calls us to change our behavior in light of the gospel.

The book of Titus is one clear example. Titus 2:11-12 says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age." Experiencing God's grace motivates us to say "no" to sinful actions and "yes" to godly actions.

If the Spirit leads someone to repentance, either outside of the group or during the weekly meeting, spend 5-10 minutes praying and listening together. Ask the Spirit to speak. Be quiet and listen, waiting for him to answer two specific questions:

1) WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?

As followers of Jesus, we have already been transformed. We are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). But we are also called to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2). Repentance will lead to change, and when we ask, the Spirit will call us to do something.

2) WHO DO YOU WANT ME TO TELL?

Jesus gave his followers his Spirit so they could be his witnesses (Acts 1:8). He wants us to bear witness to the reality of his work in our lives. When we ask the Spirit, “Who do you want me to tell?” he may lead us to talk to both believers and not-yet-believers. He may want us to tell our spouse, our kids, our friends, or another member of the church family. He may also want us to tell a coworker or a neighbor.

We often wonder how to share the gospel with our not-yet-believing friends. And yet, every time we experience the conviction of the Spirit and the forgiveness of Jesus, we have an amazing story to tell about *how Jesus is saving us today*.

When a neighbor asks, “How are you?” we can take the safe route, or we can be vulnerable and share a recent struggle with anger or worry or pride, pointing to Jesus yet again as our only hope.

After a few minutes of praying and listening, the group will discuss what they heard. Because of our lingering struggle against sin, we often need the input of our brothers and sisters to help determine exactly how to bear fruit in keeping with repentance. Praying, listening, and discussing this together is a prime opportunity to practice mutual submission. In light of the repentance the Spirit granted, and in light of what he said to the group, clear action steps should be determined together.

For more questions to consider in prayer, see Appendix 9, *Plan and Pray*.

CONCLUSION

In Revelation 2, Jesus addressed the church at Ephesus. After giving them a good deal of specific encouragement, he said, "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love" (Revelation 2:4).

When we worship and serve created things instead of the creator, when we place our faith and our trust in anything other than God to save us, when the affections of our hearts are set on earthly things, we have, at least for a moment, left our first love. We lose sight of the cross, God's clearest demonstration of love for us, and our hearts quickly wander away. As the old hymn says, "Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love."

Jesus' stinging diagnosis is followed immediately by his prescribed cure: "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first" (Revelation 2:5). The Huddle process seeks to align with Jesus' prescription.

In the Hear and Obey step, the goal is for each person to learn or be reminded of the truth about who God is, what he's done, who we are, and how we live, as revealed in Scripture. Being reminded of the truth of the gospel on a regular basis is key to maintaining our love for Jesus. "We love, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

In the Repent and Believe step, the goal is for each person to be brought to repentance and renewed faith in Jesus. Over and over again in the book of Revelation, Jesus calls believers to repent. Martin Luther famously said, "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent' (Matthew 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance."

In the Plan and Pray step, the goal is for each person to listen to the Spirit and obey as he empowers them *to do* and *to tell* in light of their encounter with Jesus. He is calling his church to return to works of faith that flow from a heart that's filled with love for him. After all, Jesus "gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works" (Titus 2:14).

May the Holy Spirit lead every Discipleship Huddle to Hear and Obey, to Repent and Believe, and to Plan and Pray in light of all that Jesus has accomplished, to the glory of God the Father.

APPENDIX 1 | TELLING OUR STORY WITH JESUS AS THE HERO

"We are creatures of story, created by a storytelling God, who created the very fabric of our reality in terms of his story. Rather than seeing our existence as a series of unconnected random events without purpose, storytelling brings meaning to our lives through the analogy of carefully crafted plot that reflects the loving sovereignty of the God of the Bible."

— Brian Godawa, award-winning filmmaker

THE GOSPEL: GOD'S STORY

Every follower of Jesus has a story to tell, and it's a story about God and his grace. However, many of us have not been equipped to tell our story in such a way that it points to Jesus as the hero. As those who want to show and share Jesus every day, it's imperative that we learn to talk about him through the medium of our stories. Often, telling our story will be the most natural way to talk to our not-yet-believing friends about Jesus.

Every great story contains four movements: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration. God's Story follows the same pattern. God's Story is the Great Story, the story that helps us make sense of all other stories. God's Story is the ultimate Good News, the gospel that we find on the pages of the Bible. Understanding the Creation-Fall-Redemption-Restoration pattern in God's Story will help us make sense of our stories, and of the broken world in which we find ourselves. Below is a quick summary of these four movements along with the themes that emerge in each one.

CREATION

God's Story begins with him miraculously creating everything out of nothing. The pinnacle of his creation is humans, man and woman made in his image. Like a mirror, Adam and Eve reflect what he looks like on the inside. They are totally unique amongst all of God's creation. This defines them and gives them worth. As image bearers, the humans enjoy a unique relationship with God. They are made to worship him, to obey him, and to love him.

The key themes in this movement of the Story are *origin* and *identity*.

FALL

Though Adam and Eve enjoy a close relationship with God, they eventually choose to disobey him. They rebel against God and choose to believe lies about him. This rebellion, called sin, brings about relational brokenness between Adam, Eve, and God. Ashamed, they hide from him and place blame on each other and on the serpent who deceived them. (He was later revealed to be Satan.) As a result of their sin, they would face death someday. God curses the serpent, and foretells a coming day when he would be destroyed.

The key themes in this movement of the Story are *brokenness and blame*.

REDEMPTION

Many generations after Adam and Eve, God chooses to enter a special covenant relationship with Abraham and with his descendants. These people will become a nation called Israel, and God's plan is to bless the whole world through them. He is like a father to them and loves them deeply. After being miraculously freed from slavery in Egypt, under the leadership of Moses, God leads his people to the land he'd promised years before to provide for them. God also establishes a sacrificial system that allows his people to substitute the life of an animal in place of their own life. This makes it possible for God to forgive his people's sin, and for them to remain in relationship with him.

In the Promised Land, the Israelites rebel against God's authority and experience oppression from neighboring nations, but over and over again God rescues them when they cry out to him. Israel eventually becomes a well-established nation led by a succession of kings, but their pattern of rebellion and repentance continues. Finally, God removes them from the land because they persistently worship false gods despite the warning of God's prophets. However, God promises to one day send a perfect king who will redeem and rescue his people completely.

After 400 years of silence from God, his people finally hear him speak. Jesus, the Son of God, is miraculously born to a young virgin woman, a clear sign that he is the promised rescuer the prophets foretold. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Jesus lives a sinless life, always trusting and obeying God, his Father. He begins to establish his kingdom by healing the sick, showing compassion to the poor and needy, freeing the spiritually oppressed, and telling people that he can forgive their sins if they put their trust in him. He is fully God and fully man. His message of forgiveness through faith deeply offends the religious leaders of his day, and they orchestrate his execution.

However, three days later Jesus rises from the dead. His followers see him, and he sends them out to tell everyone that forgiveness of sins is possible through faith in him. His death pays the penalty for all of the sins of humanity, making the rescue and redemption of everyone possible. Through him, people can now be made right with God, and know him as their Father.

The key themes in this movement of the Story are *rescue and deliverance*.

RESTORATION

A few weeks after the resurrection, Jesus ascends into heaven and sends his Holy Spirit to live inside of his followers, giving them new desires and the new power they need to walk in his ways and to live as his witnesses. His followers are called a "new creation," and through the Spirit's power, are gradually changed to become more like Jesus.

Though Jesus began ruling as the King of his people while he was on earth, he will return to earth someday to judge all people, to establish his full rule and reign, and to usher in a new heavens and a new earth. Here, God's people will worship him perfectly—Father, Son, and Spirit—just as they were originally created to do. Jesus' followers anxiously await this amazing day.

The key themes in this movement of the Story are *hope* and *transformation*.

PUTTING TOGETHER YOUR GOSPEL STORY

Understanding God's Story is essential for properly interpreting the Creation-Fall-Redemption-Restoration elements in our own story. Though we regularly believe that our stories are about us, our stories are really about God. "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

Your story is ultimately God's Story. It's by him and about him. Your story is good news, a story about God's redemption of a broken person. He is the main character and the hero, not you. "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever" (Romans 11:36).

Think through the four elements of your story, and consider how each one is an opportunity to point to your need for God and his work. Our stories consist of a countless string of smaller scenes, so begin by praying and asking the Holy Spirit to show you which parts you should include in your gospel story.

CREATION

We all have a fundamental belief about our origin—who or what gave us our existence, made us who we are, and shaped us into the person we are today. God's Story begins with him bringing everything into existence. He is the author and main character of the Story, and all things find their worth and value in him.

And yet, all of us have looked to someone or something other than God to define us, to give us a sense of worth and value. As you begin your gospel story, talk about your background, some early shaping influences, and what gave you your sense of worth and value.

Key Themes: Origin, Identity

Key Gospel Question: Who or what most shaped your understanding of yourself? What were the sources of your sense of personal value and identity?

Other questions to consider:

- Where were you born and what was going on in your family at the time?
- Talk about your *relationships* with your family members (parents, siblings, or other important people).
- Early on, who and what were some of the main *influences* in your life?

- What did you believe about God?

FALL

The world we live in is not as it should be. We are not as we should be. Brokenness is all around us. We have deeply held convictions about why things are broken. We often tend to place the blame at the feet of others: parents, siblings, friends, teachers, leaders, and even the government.

God's Story shows us that our own sin is the primary thing that wreaks havoc on our lives. As you tell your gospel story, talk about specific ways that your sin brought about pain and destruction in your life. Include failed attempts at fixing the brokenness in your life.

Key Themes: Brokenness, Blame

Key Gospel Question: How was your relationship with God and others not the way God created it to be? Why?

Other questions to consider:

- What were some of your most painful experiences?
- How did you respond to the pain?
- What was broken in your life? Relationships? Behavior? Attitudes? Health?
- Who did you blame for this brokenness?
- How did you try to fix the brokenness? Were those efforts effective?

REDEMPTION

All of us look to created things to save us, to rescue us, to give us significance, and to make us right. Money, possessions, acceptance, approval, relationships, and achievements all seem to offer some hope for repairing the brokenness in our lives. Education, government, recreation, and self-fulfillment can grab our attention as potential saviors too. But the gospel tells a different story. The Redemption movement of your story has the potential to be very powerful because this is where you get to declare your faith in Jesus as the One who has saved and rescued you. Talk specifically about how you placed your trust in Jesus to save and rescue you from your sin and from the brokenness in your life. Describe how Jesus' life, death and resurrection have brought redemption to specific broken parts of your story.

Key Themes: Rescue, Deliverance

Key Gospel Question: How has Jesus redeemed and rescued you through his death on the cross? How did you come to put your faith and trust in him to save you and restore your life to the way God intended it to be?

Other questions to consider:

- What people or things failed to rescue you?
- How did the Spirit open your eyes to the glory of Jesus? (Which people, Bible passages, difficult circumstances, or supernatural experiences did he use?)
- What were some of the effects of your belief in Jesus? How did you begin to experience God restoring you back to the way you were originally created?

RESTORATION

There's a deep longing within each of us for change, for things to be different tomorrow than they are today. For some, this means finding a job or a spouse. Others hope for world peace and a fair distribution of resources, a Utopian society. The desire to "have it all" is a longing that many share. What we're all craving is a mending of the brokenness that surrounds us. We want restoration, but we want it to look a certain way.

Because of what Jesus has done, restoration has begun. We are a new creation, and we've been made right with the Father. In God's Story, restoration means that his image bearers begin to live in the way they were originally created to live. His Spirit lives in and through us, making us more like Jesus, even though we are still living in a fallen, broken world. Conclude your gospel story by talking about what the Spirit is doing in your life now. Share some evidences of his grace, indicators that you've been made new, that his restorative work has already begun in you.

Key Themes: Hope, Transformation

Key Gospel Question: What has changed and is changing in your life now? Who and what is the focus of your life today?

Other questions to consider:

- What are you hoping will change next week, month, year, 10 years?
- Who is the focus of your preferred version of the future?
- What are some specific ways you've seen the Spirit make you more like Jesus (consider the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23)? Examine restoration in your attitude, your behavior, and your relationships, and be as specific as you can.
- What aspect of the new heavens and new earth are you most excited about?

A FEW STORY TIPS

- Make your story 10-15 minutes long.
- Consider writing out your story, either in outline form or word-for-word. This will help you stay on track and will ensure you include the most important aspects.
- Use normal, everyday language to tell your story.

- The Father already knows your story and accepts you fully because of Jesus, so you can be totally honest with others. Don't fear what people might think.
- Practice telling your story with close friends and family so you will be prepared to share it with others as God provides opportunities.
- Be prepared to share your gospel story in the midst of spiritual conversations with not-yet-believers. Any time the conversation turns to God, Jesus, church, or the Bible—or even to themes like identity, brokenness, or longing for fulfillment—it might be a great opportunity to share how Jesus is the hero of your story.
- Pray and ask the Spirit to speak through you as you tell your story.

REMEMBER, IT'S ACTUALLY *HIS* STORY!

APPENDIX 2 | LISTEN FOR THE HEART, PART 1

ONE-ANOTHER CARE

"Each tree is recognized by its own fruit." — Luke 6:43

THE IMPORTANCE OF STORY

Every person has a story to tell. Whether the story of their day or the story of their life, the words they say are full of meaning and importance. If we want to grow in our ability to speak effectively about Jesus, to proclaim the gospel (to believers and not-yet-believers) then learning how to listen to a person's story is crucial.

In Luke 6:43-45, Jesus helps us understand the connection between words, actions, and the heart. "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briers. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks."

Listening to a person's story is kind of like examining a fruit tree. Sometimes the fruit is obvious: financial difficulty, sexual sin, marital conflict, anger, etc. But the real action is under the surface, in the root structure of the tree. According to Jesus, actions and words reveal the heart. And the heart is of primary importance because the heart is the seat of faith. "With the heart a person believes" (Romans 10:10).

A person's story has the potential to reveal where they have replaced Jesus as the only right object of faith. Jesus is the only one who can save, and we regularly look to created things instead. These false saviors will often be revealed in our stories.

Every great story contains four movements: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration. God's Story follows the same pattern. God's Story is the Great Story, the story that helps us make sense of all other stories. God's Story is the ultimate Good News, the gospel that we find on the pages of the Bible. Understanding the Creation-Fall-Redemption-Restoration pattern in God's Story will help us make sense of our stories, and of the stories we hear from people everyday.

Briefly consider the four movements of God's Story along with the themes that emerge in each one.

CREATION

God creates everything out of nothing, including Adam and Eve, who are made in his image.

The key themes in this movement of the Story are *origin* and *identity*. It shows us where we've come from and what defines us.

FALL

Sin enters the world when Adam and Eve disobey God. Relational brokenness, hiding, shame, blame, separation from God, sickness, and death are all now a part of our world. However, future deliverance is immediately foretold.

The key themes in this movement of the Story are *brokenness* and *blame*. It reveals the source of all brokenness in the world and who is ultimately to blame for it.

REDEMPTION

God enters a covenant relationship with Abraham, and his descendants, Israel. Throughout their history, he rescues and redeems them in countless ways. He is their loving Father who promises to work for those who wait for him (Isaiah 64:4). Finally, God becomes a man in the person of Jesus Christ, and though his life, death, and resurrection, redemption from sin and reconciliation with the Father are made possible for all people.

The key themes in this movement of the Story are *rescue* and *deliverance*. It displays God as the only one who can rescue us and put the broken pieces of our world back together.

RESTORATION

After the resurrection, Jesus ascends into heaven and sends his Spirit to dwell in his followers and to restore them as image bearers. At his first coming, Jesus began his rule and reign in his people. He will someday return to judge the world and to restore all things by ushering in the new heavens and new earth. His kingdom will come in fullness.

The key themes in this movement of the Story are *hope* and *transformation*. It shows us what our hope should be for the future, and who will be the focus of that future reality.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Utilize the four movements as a tool for sorting the information in a person's story. Here are some guidelines and some key things to listen for along the way. In settings where taking notes is appropriate, use the Creation-Fall-Redemption-Restoration tool as a guide. It is vitally important to pray and ask the Spirit to give us ears to hear, and to help us ask good questions if needed. And always thank the person for sharing their story.

CREATION

We all have a fundamental belief about our origin—who or what gave us our existence, made us who we are, and shaped us into the person we are today.

God's Story begins with him bringing everything into existence. He is the author and main character of the Story, and all things find their worth and value in him. And yet, all of us have looked to someone or something other than God to define us, to give us a sense of worth and value.

As a person begins their story, pay close attention to...

- Early shaping influences
- Family dynamics
- Important life events
- Any God-talk

Keep in mind the key themes of origin and identity, and listen for pride, accomplishments, insecurity, failures, approval, rejection, and statements of worth. Tim Chester and Steve Timmis¹ suggest keeping the following questions in mind:

- What do they assume the world should be like?
- What kind of person would they like to be?
- Who are their heroes?
- What would have to be in place for them to feel happy?

The Key Heart Question is: What is my identity? Who or what defines me or gives me worth, value, purpose, or meaning?

FALL

The world we live in is not as it should be. Brokenness is all around us. Everyone has a fundamental belief about why things are broken. We all tend to place the blame at the feet of others: parents, siblings, friends, teachers, leaders, the government, etc.

However, God's Story shows us that our own sin is the primary thing that wreaks havoc on our lives.

As the person's story continues, listen for...

- Painful experiences and how the person responded to the pain. (Even innocent sufferers and victims can exacerbate the problem through sinful responses.)
- Broken relationships, behavior, attitudes, health, etc.
- Patterns of addiction or abuse
- Any God-talk

¹ Steve Timmis and Tim Chester, *Everyday Church: Gospel Communities on Mission*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 118.

Keep in mind the themes of brokenness and blame, and listen for fear, shame, hiding, blame, guilt, and a victim mentality. Chester and Timmis² offer these questions as you listen:

- How do they describe their struggles and battles?
- What do they feel is their most pressing problem?
- What do they feel they lack?
- Who or what do they think is responsible?

The Key Heart Question is: What is my problem? Why are people (including me) and things not the way they are supposed to be?

REDEMPTION

All of us look to created things to save us, to rescue us, to give us significance, and to make us right with God. Money, possessions, acceptance, approval, relationships, and achievements all seem to offer some hope for repairing the brokenness in our lives. Education, government, recreation, and self-fulfillment can grab our attention as potential saviors, too.

But the gospel tells a different story. God is the only one who can put the broken pieces of our lives back together. Jesus is our only hope for rescue, salvation, and redemption. His life and death alone can make a person right with the Father.

Statements about Redemption may be scattered throughout the person's story, so listen closely for...

- Placing hope in people or things to provide salvation, security, and significance
- Justification of the person's actions, or attempts to fix brokenness on their own
- Judging others or failing to extend forgiveness
- Any God-talk

Keep in mind the themes of rescue and deliverance, and listen for revenge, power, control, anger, proving one's self, comfort, and self-medication. Chester and Timmis³ recommend listening for answers to these questions:

- What do they think will make life better?
- What provides a sense of escape or release?
- Who or what will deliver their hopes?
- What are their functional saviors?

² Timmis and Chester, *Everyday Church*, 118.

³ Ibid.

Key Heart Question: What is my solution? Who or what will rescue me and fix what is broken?

RESTORATION

There's a deep longing within each of us for change, for things to be different tomorrow than they are today. For some, this means finding a job or a spouse. Others hope for world peace and a fair distribution of resources, a Utopian society. The desire to "have it all" is a longing that many share. What we're all craving is a mending of the brokenness that surrounds us. We want restoration, but we want it to look a certain way.

Because of what Jesus has done, restoration has begun. In every circumstance, he is present, and he offers peace and joy. As Jesus' followers, we are indwelt by his Spirit. He is restoring us as image bearers who can begin to live in the way we were originally created to live. Someday, Jesus will return to judge the world and to usher in the new heavens and new earth. The Father, Son, and Spirit will be the focus of our existence for eternity.

The last half of a person's story might include...

- A preferred version of the future
- The statement, "Everything would be okay if my circumstances just changed."
- The desire for other people to change
- God-talk

Keep in mind the themes of hope and transformation and listen for entitlement, self-focus, comfort, avoidance, and apathy or a loss of hope. Chester and Timmis⁴ give these questions:

- What is the long-term project to which they are working?
- What are the dreams for which they make sacrifices?

Key Heart Question: What is my hope? What will the world or my world look like when all is as it should be?

⁴ Timmis and Chester, *Everyday Church*, 118.

APPENDIX 3 | HEAR AND OBEY

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." — John 14:26

HOW DO I STUDY THE BIBLE AND ASK THE 4 QUESTIONS?

A few things to keep in mind...

- Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to speak through his word. It's his job to guide us into all truth and to glorify Jesus (John 16:13-14).
- Depending on the passage, a study Bible may be helpful in providing some important background information. Commentaries can be helpful as well, but most will provide too much information and could be distracting. Keep it simple!

THE 4 QUESTIONS

1. WHO IS GOD?

What does the text say about the character and nature of God? The Bible is God's Story—Father, Son, Spirit—so we begin by asking about how his character and nature are revealed in what we're reading. The story is about him. Look for specific references to his attributes: holy, eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present, unchanging, compassionate, gracious, patient, loving, kind, good, gentle, etc. In narrative portions, look for implied references to his attributes. What does the story reveal about the specific activity of the Father, Son, and Spirit?

2. WHAT HAS HE DONE?

What does the text say about the work of God? God's work throughout all of human history is diverse and magnificent. All of it is worth proclaiming. However, the person and work of Jesus is central, revealed on every page of the Bible (Luke 24:27). He is the hero and the main character. The Spirit does not want us to miss Jesus.

Look for references to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, either through foreshadowing (e.g., saving Noah in the flood, redeeming Israel from slavery in Egypt, King David as a man after God's own heart), through prophecy (e.g., Psalm 22 or Isaiah 53), or through the New Testament story of Jesus' earthly life and the establishment of his church. This ensures a uniquely Christian, gospel-centered answer to this question.

3. WHO ARE WE IN LIGHT OF THAT?

What does the text say about our identity? God has always been working to save "a people for his own possession" (1 Peter 2:9). Throughout the Bible, note the things that are true of God's people. This adds depth and richness to our understanding of who we are as New Covenant believers. For example, the Levitical priests were

anointed and set apart for special service to God. Now, we are all anointed with God's Spirit (2 Cor. 1:21-22), and, because of Jesus, are all a part of God's "royal priesthood," set apart for special service to God.

4. HOW DO WE LIVE?

In light of all of this, how does it change the way we live? When reading the Bible, we almost always start with the question, "How does this apply to my life?" But rightly motivated, gospel-centered action flows out of an understanding of who God is, what he has done, and who we are in light of God's character and work. Rather than starting with this question, end with it.

And then, take action! Jesus warns against being merely a hearer of his word but not a doer (Mt. 7:24-27). The gospel motivates and empowers us to live in an entirely new way.

APPENDIX 4 | LISTEN FOR THE HEART, PART 2

ONE-ANOTHER CARE

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." — Matthew 12:34

HOW DO I LISTEN FOR THE HEART AS I PROVIDE ONE-ANOTHER CARE?

- We need to begin by asking the Spirit to give us ears to hear and a willingness to speak the truth in love.
- Consider taking notes while listening to help you remember details and identify patterns and themes.
- When meeting for the purpose of intentional counseling, ask the person to come prepared to share their story.
- Whether listening to the story of a person's *life* or the story of a person's *day*, always listen for the heart. Listen to discern what the person is experiencing and struggling with in the midst of his or her situation.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO LISTEN FOR IN A PERSON'S STORY:

1. Emotional words. ("I'm angry." "I'm afraid." "I was really hurt.")
2. Interpretive words. ("This shouldn't happen." "I guess I'm getting what I deserve." "I wonder if it's even worth getting up in the morning.")
3. Self-talk. ("I am such a failure." "I am not smart enough, pretty enough, etc." "I have accomplished this and that." "I always got good grades and performed well in various activities.") *Listen closely for pride and insecurity.*
4. God-talk. ("I tried hard to obey God." "How could God let this happen to me?" "God's never done anything for me." "God is punishing me.") *Listen closely for denial, blame, and an unwillingness to take responsibility.⁵*
5. Stated motives. ("I wanted to get even; I wanted revenge." "I was so ashamed, I decided to never tell my parents." "I need people to like me; I need their approval." "I feel so guilty, I could never forgive myself.")
6. Patterns of behavior, positive or negative. *Listen closely for power and control.*
7. Destructive or repeated sin. ("I started using drugs when I was 16." "I smoked pot every day for 5 or 6 years." "I slept with more women than I can count.") *Listen closely for sources of comfort and self-medicating.*
8. Abuse or neglect. ("My dad would scream at me if I came home with C's." "I was raped by my step-brother when I was 12." "I used to play alone in my room

⁵ 1-4 are based on Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002), 128.

most of the time." "The kids at school used to call me fat.") *Listen closely for a victim mentality.*

9. Dad and Mom. ("I've never met my dad." "My mom gave me everything I wanted." "My dad said he wished I was never born." "I don't remember my dad hugging me." "Nothing was ever good enough for my mom.")

ENCOURAGEMENT & FOLLOW-UP

Whether in an MC/Huddle setting or in an intentional one-another care situation, always provide encouragement to a person who has just shared their story. Also, it often helps to ask a few initial follow-up questions right away.

ENCOURAGEMENT AFTER THEIR STORY

- "Thank you for sharing your story. It is an honor to hear it."
- "Your story is an amazing story about God and his work. God is in this!" (Most people will not see it this way initially, but you should say it anyway).
- "It is very easy to focus on your circumstances at a time like this. I completely understand. But God is primarily concerned with your heart in this situation. He wants to keep pulling your focus up out of the mire of your circumstances and onto him. Keep watching for your heart responses in the midst of this trial."

ASK SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER CLARITY

Statements like "I'm struggling with purity," "I tend to lose my temper," or "I struggle with depression," could mean a lot of different things, so don't assume. Instead, always ask for *definitions* (of words and terms) and *details* (What? When? How?). The motive for asking such questions is a loving desire to know each other deeply enough to know where the gospel still needs to prevail. (See also Appendix 5.)

- Tell me more about your relationship with your dad...
- How did you feel when that significant event happened?
- Did that hurtful situation ever get resolved?
- How old were you when that happened?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- Where are you still struggling to believe the gospel?
- How has this situation helped you see your sin more clearly?
- Where do you see God at work in this situation?

APPENDIX 5 | ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

ONE-ANOTHER CARE

"The purpose in a person's heart is like deep water, but a person of understanding will draw it out." — Proverbs 20:5

HOW DO I ASK GOOD QUESTIONS AS I PROVIDE ONE-ANOTHER CARE?

- We must be led by the Holy Spirit. It's his job to bring conviction, and he is the primary shepherd. He alone knows the depths of a person's heart, and he will guide us as we lovingly pursue people with good questions. Pray before, during, and after any care conversation, asking the Spirit to speak.
- Often the Spirit will provide great questions immediately after a conversation. Write these down for future reference.
- Ask lots of questions throughout the conversation, especially in the beginning. We like to say, "Ask 10 questions for every pronouncement."
- Ask open ended questions that can't be answered with a "yes" or "no," as these questions do not provide much information and can leave room for us to make a lot of assumptions about the answer.
- Sometimes the best question is not a question. "Tell me more..." is a great way to invite a person to elaborate on what's happening in their heart.

SOME GOOD QUESTIONS TO USE

Statements like, "I'm struggling with purity," "I tend to lose my temper," or "I struggle with depression," could mean a lot of different things. Rather than assuming, always ask for *definitions*, *descriptions*, and *details*. The motive for asking such questions is a loving desire to know each other deeply enough to know where the gospel still needs to prevail. The following is adapted from Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, pp. 170-178.

- Ask **what questions** to gather more information: "*What* did you do next?"
- Ask **how questions** to clarify what they mean with concrete, real-life examples. "*How* did you talk to your wife?" (Politely? Calmly? Yelling? Swearing?)
- Ask **why questions** to get at the driving motive or underlying desires. Ask the person to share their reasons, values, purposes, and desires. "*Why* do you raise your voice and pound your fist?"
- Ask **how often** and **where questions** to find recurring patterns and themes. "*Where* were you when this happened? *How often* do you react this way?"
- Ask **when questions** to clarify the order of events. "*When* exactly did you begin to raise your voice?"

A WORD ABOUT “WHY?”

Why is a great question because it helps uncover the motives of the heart. We sometimes refer to why as “the why shovel,” because it helps us dig around to get to the root of a problem. However, a few cautions should be noted.

Why can sound condescending, judgmental, and even rhetorical (a question that's asked where the answer is so obvious that the question itself helps prove a point). “Why on earth did you do that?” clearly implies that the person asking the question thinks a poor decision was made. The question does not invite an honest, vulnerable response.

Why can also be wielded in an annoying and exasperating way. Think of the way a 3-year-old asks why after every answer, ad nauseam. While it often takes time to get to the root, **try to vary the way you ask why**. Remember that why has to do with *cause* and *purpose*. “Why did you raise your voice?” can mean, “What were you hoping to accomplish by raising your voice?” (purpose), or, “What provoked you to raise your voice?” (cause). Uncovering both causes and purposes is an important part of getting to the heart and taking responsibility.

Also, why is sometimes used as a one-word question that can sound accusatory and does not invite an open dialogue. If a wife says to her husband, “I’m feeling sad and frustrated,” and he responds by simply asking *why*, she may perceive that he is upset that she is feeling sad and wants to hear her reason so he can refute it. **When asking why, make an effort to express genuine care and interest.**

Why can be a powerful tool that must be wielded with wisdom and the sensitivity of the Holy Spirit.

APPENDIX 6 | X-RAY QUESTIONS⁶

BY DAVID POWLISON

1. What do you love? Is there something you love more than God or your neighbor?
2. What do you want? What do you desire? What do you crave, long for, wish? Whose desires do you obey?
3. What do you seek? What are your personal expectations and goals? What are your intentions? What are you working for?
4. Where do you bank your hopes? What hope are you working toward or building your life around?
5. What do you fear? Fear is the flip side of desire. For example, if I desire your acceptance, then I fear your rejection.
6. What do you feel like doing? This is a synonym for desire. Sometimes we feel like eating a gallon of ice cream, or staying in bed, or refusing to talk, etc.
7. What do you think you need? In most cases a person's felt needs picture his or her idol cravings. Often what we have called necessities are actually deceptive masters that rule our hearts. They control us because they seem plausible. They don't seem so bad on the surface and it isn't sin to want them. However, I must not be ruled by the "need" to feel good about myself, to feel loved and accepted, to feel some sense of accomplishment, to have financial security, to experience good health, to live a life that is organized, pain-free, and happy.
8. What are your plans, agendas, strategies, and intentions designed to accomplish? What are you really going after in the situations and relationships of life? What are you really working to get?
9. What makes you tick? What sun does your planet revolve around? Where do you find your garden of delight? What lights up your world? What food sustains your life? What really matters to you? What are you living for?
10. Where do you find refuge, safety, comfort, and escape? When you are fearful, discouraged, and upset, where do you run? Do you run to God for comfort and safety or to something else? (To food, to others, to work, to solitude?)
11. What do you trust? Do you functionally rest in the Lord? Do you find your sense of well-being in his presence and promises? Or do you rest in something or someone else?
12. Whose performance matters to you? This question digs out self-reliance or self-righteousness. It digs out living through another. Do you get depressed when you are wrong or when you fail? Have you pinned your hopes on another person? Are

⁶ As used by permission in *How People Change*, by Paul David Tripp and Timothy Lane.

you too dependent on the performance of your husband, wife, children, or friends?

13. Whom must you please? Whose opinion counts? From whom do you desire approval or fear rejection? Whose value system do you measure yourself against? In whose eyes are you living?
14. Who are your role models? Who are the people you respect? Who do you want to be like? Who is your "idol"? (In our culture, this word is used for role model.)
15. What do you desperately hope will last in your life? What do you feel must always be there? What can't you live without?
16. How do you define success or failure in any particular situation? Are your standards God's standards? Do you define success as the ability to reach your goals? The respect and approval of others? Is it defined by a certain position or the ability to maintain a certain lifestyle? By affluence? By appearance? By acceptance? By location? By accomplishment?
17. What makes you feel rich, secure, and prosperous? The possession, experience, and enjoyment of what would make you happy? The Bible uses the metaphor of treasure here.
18. What would bring you the greatest pleasure? The greatest misery?
19. Whose political power would make everything better for you? Don't just think in a national sense. Think about the workplace and the church. Whose agenda would you like to see succeed and why?
20. Whose victory and success would make your life happy? How do you define victory and success?
21. What do you see as your rights? What do you feel entitled to? What do you feel is your right to expect, seek, require, or demand?
22. In what situations do you feel pressured or tense? When do you feel confident and relaxed? When you are pressured, where do you turn? What do you think about? What do you fear? What do you seek to escape from? What do you escape to?
23. What do you really want out of life? What payoff are you seeking from the things you do? What is the return you are working for?
24. What do you pray for? The fact that we pray does not necessarily mean we are where we should be spiritually. On the contrary, prayer can be a key revealer of the idols of our hearts. Prayer can reveal patterns of self-centeredness, self-righteousness, materialism, fear of man, etc.
25. What do you think about most often? In the morning, to what does your mind drift instinctively? When you are doing a menial task or driving alone in your car, what captures your mind? What is your mindset?

26. What do you talk about? What occupies your conversations with others? What subjects do you tend to discuss over and over with your friends? The Bible says it is out of the heart that our mouths speak.
27. How do you spend your time? What are your daily priorities? What things do you invest time in every day?
28. What are your fantasies? What are your dreams at night? What do you daydream about?
29. What is your belief system? What beliefs do you hold about life, God, yourself, others? What is your worldview? What is the personal "mythology" that structures the way you interpret things? What are your specific beliefs about your present situation? What do you value?
30. What are your idols or false gods? In what do you place your trust or set your hopes? What do you consistently turn to or regularly seek? Where do you take refuge? Who is the savior, judge, controller of your world? Whom do you serve? What voice controls you?
31. In what ways do you live for yourself?
32. In what ways do you live as a slave to the Devil? Where are you susceptible to his lies? Where do you give in to deceit?
33. When do you say, "If only..."? Our "if onlys" actually define our vision of paradise. They picture our biggest fears and greatest disappointments. They can reveal where we tend to envy others. They picture where we wish we could rewrite our life story. They picture where we are dissatisfied and what we crave.
34. What instinctively feels right to you? What are your opinions—those things that you feel are true?

APPENDIX 7 | SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE ONE-ANOTHER CARE

"Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ..." — Ephesians 4:15

HOW DO I SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE AS I PROVIDE ONE-ANOTHER CARE?

- We must be led by the Holy Spirit. Pray and ask him what to say. We should only speak if the Spirit leads us to speak; but if the Spirit leads us to speak, we must speak.
- Ask lots of questions throughout the conversation, and especially in the beginning. We like to say, "Ask 10 questions for every pronouncement."
- Consider our own motivation. Pray through it. Is it our desire to honor God and point the person to him? Are we fearful of the person, or are we resting in our identity as a child of God?
- Proclaim Jesus as much as possible. He is the hero of every person's story and the real savior we all need in every situation.
- Keep the goal in mind: repentance and faith. Proclamations should help lead a person to Jesus.

SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE BY...

- Declaring the good news about who God is and what he has done. The root of our negative emotions and sinful behavior is wrong thinking about God, but we often fail to recognize this because we are not consciously thinking about God at all. We can translate thoughts and feelings into statements about God by making God the subject of the sentence. For example, "I feel alone" means "God is distant" or "God has abandoned me." "My husband is hopeless" means "God is too weak and powerless to redeem my husband." When we translate thoughts and feelings into statements about God, we can pinpoint the lie that needs to be turned from in repentance and we can identify specific truths about God to declare as good news and to receive by faith.
- Avoiding simple advice or quoting scripture in a way that is unhelpful. If someone confesses worry, it probably won't help to remind the person that Jesus said, "Do not worry" three times in Matthew 6. Rather, focus on their identity as a beloved child of God, and remind them of the Father's great care for them (which Jesus highlights in Matthew 6), a truth which can free them from worry and fear.
- Not judging the person's heart. 1 Corinthians 4:5 warns, "Do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes (NASB, "motives")"

of the heart." And Proverbs 18:13 says, "If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame." If we have preconceived judgments about a person's heart ("I know for sure why they did that!"), that will come through in our communication, and our speech will not be filled with grace. We need the Holy Spirit to purify our motives before we speak.

- Asking permission before making a pronouncement: "Can I tell you what I'm seeing?" This ensures that the person is open and ready to receive a direct word.
- Acknowledging that you might be off target and inviting the other person to clarify. When we think we have spotted the root issue, we are often eager to rush ahead, but sometimes we have incorrectly assumed the thoughts or motives of the other person. Rather than charging forward in self-confidence, we can humbly offer our observations and invite feedback by saying something like, "Tell me if this rings true," or, "Please tell me if this is off."
- Utilizing very direct communication as the Spirit leads. As long as the Spirit is prompting it, and it is spoken in love, we need to be obedient to say what the Spirit is leading us to say. Sometimes he will lead us to say something very directly, without asking for permission.
- Calling people to repentance. Often, we have to ask, "Is there anything that would prevent you from repenting right now?" or "Would you like to talk to the Father about this right now?" This simple but direct question can help people cross the threshold of repentance and renewed faith in the gospel.

APPENDIX 8 | FRUIT TO ROOT

The 4 Questions provide a helpful framework for uncovering what's going on in our hearts, how our beliefs are shaping our thoughts, words, and actions. By beginning with the obvious fruit in our lives and working down to our heart motives (which are "hidden in darkness" according to 1 Corinthians 4:5), we go from "fruit to root."

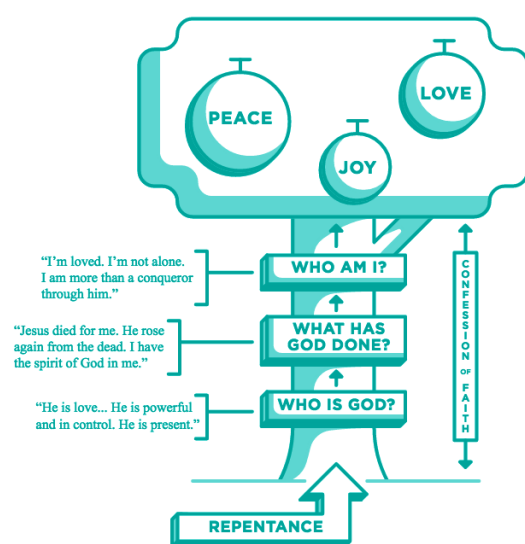
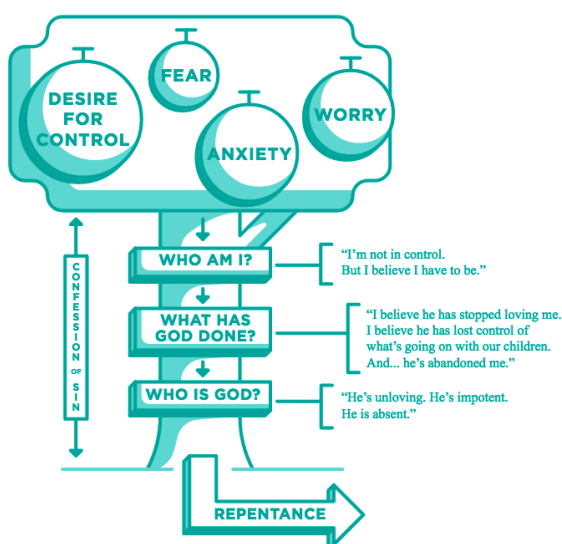
Essentially, the idea is that our actions reveal what we are believing about our identity; what we are believing about our identity reveals our perspective on what God has done in and through Jesus; and our perspective on the work of God reveals what we're affirming about the character and nature of God.

Here's a brief example. When we are filled with worry and fear, we could be believing that we are alone, unprotected, and unloved. If we're believing that we are alone and unloved, our perspective on what God has done might be that he is against us, that he doesn't have our best interests in mind, and that he is not in control. If we believe these things about the work of God, then we might be accusing him of being small, powerless, and unloving.

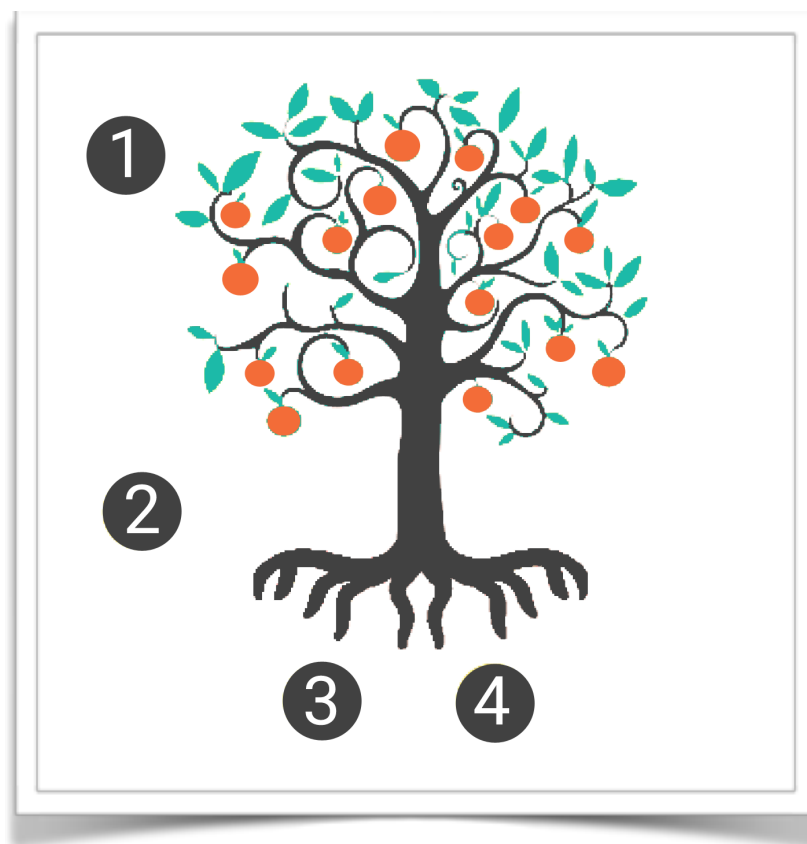
The goal of going from fruit to root is for the Spirit to bring us to repentance and renewed faith in Jesus.

Repentance means to change our mind about who or what is God. Our sinful thoughts, words, and actions spring from unbelief in our hearts, which is false worship, or idolatry. Therefore, our repentance must address the root and not merely the fruit. "I repent of my belief that you are small, powerless, and unloving. More control will not save me. I am not god."

Faith is when we reaffirm our confidence that Jesus is the One True God. We exercise true faith when we look at Jesus and say, "You are powerful and in control. You loved me so much that you died for me. I am protected by You. You are my rock and my refuge."



THE FRUIT OF YOUR LIFE IS SEEN AT THE SURFACE



REPENTANCE: FROM FRUIT TO ROOT

1. HOW AM I LIVING?

What bad fruit is appearing in my life? (Fruit is noticeable behaviors, attitudes, and emotions.)

2. WHO AM I?

What does the fruit reveal that I am believing about my identity?

3. WHAT HAS GOD DONE?

What does my belief about my identity *falsely* say about what God has or has not done?

4. WHO IS GOD?

What am I *falsely* believing about who God is and what he is like?

Repent and turn from every false judgment, belief, conviction, or desire.

FAITH: FROM ROOT TO FRUIT

4. WHO IS GOD?

Affirm and trust the truth about God's character and nature that addresses the lie(s) you were believing.

3. WHAT HAS GOD DONE THROUGH JESUS?

Affirm and trust the specific way God has demonstrated his character and nature through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

2. WHO AM I?

Receive and believe what God says about your new nature in light of who he is and what he has done.

1. HOW SHOULD I LIVE?

What new fruit can I bear by the power of the Spirit? Ask God for his transforming grace to empower you.

Turn to Jesus in renewed faith.

APPENDIX 9 | PLAN AND PRAY

"Repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with ... repentance." — Acts 26:20

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." — Acts 1:8

HOW DO I BEAR FRUIT IN KEEPING WITH REPENTANCE?

The Spirit will always call us to live out our gospel identity. Pray and listen to the Spirit, asking him, "What do you want me to do?" and "Who do you want me to tell?" Consider these questions in the context of each of our identities.

FAMILY

- Who should I love? And how?
- Who do I need to forgive?
- Who do I need to seek forgiveness from?

MISSIONARY

- Who should I spend time with, and how can I be intentional with that time?
- Who can I tell about Jesus' work in me?

SERVANT

- How can I help in tangible ways?
- What should I give (time, money, prayer), and to whom should I give it?

DISCIPLE

- What do I need to avoid that provokes or strengthens sinful desires? How can I flee from and resist temptation?
- What do I need to practice that feeds or increases Spiritual desires? How can I pursue holiness and godliness?

APPENDIX 10 | THE FUNCTIONAL CENTRALITY OF THE GOSPEL⁷

BY MIKE BULLMORE

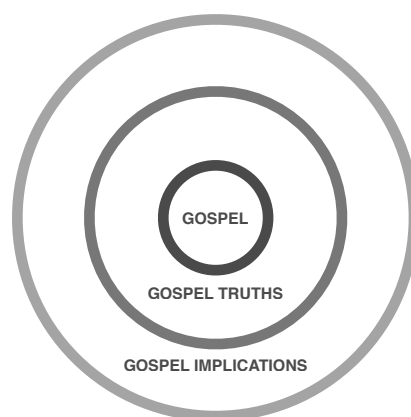
Shepherding Your People to Think and Live in Line with the Truth of the Gospel

A local church is healthy to the degree that: (1) its pastor-teachers are able to accurately, effectively, and broadly bring the gospel to bear in the real lives of their people; and (2) its people have a deep personal understanding of and appreciation for the gospel, so as to be able to live in the good of the gospel daily. I call this the functional centrality of the gospel.

Critical to achieving this aim is making clear the connections between the gospel and its doctrinal and behavioral implications. We could call these connections "gospel truths" and "gospel conduct" respectively.

THE GOSPEL

Imagine three concentric circles. In the center is the gospel itself, perhaps best represented by the words of 1 Cor. 15:3 – "Christ died for our sins." This simple phrase speaks of the reality of our sin, the necessity of divine punishment, and the wonderful provision of salvation from divine wrath by God in Christ. Paul speaks of this "good news" as the matter of "first importance," and we know well the priority he gives this message in his preaching and writing (cf. 1 Cor. 2:1-4). Hence, its centrality. But in order for it to have a functional centrality it must be connected to areas where people live their lives.



GOSPEL TRUTHS

This brings us to our second circle, gospel truths. These are specific, concrete doctrinal implications of the gospel; or, as Paul puts it, "doctrine that conforms to (i.e., takes its shape from) the glorious gospel" (1 Tim. 1:10-11). These gospel truths bring the gospel to bear particularly on the mind; they are useful in renewing the mind so that our thinking is more and more shaped by the truth of the gospel.

As we might expect, the book of Romans is especially saturated with these gospel truths. Let me give three examples:

(1) In Romans 5:1 Paul states, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Notice the logic of the verse. Something follows from the essential truth of the gospel. Our having peace with God

⁷ Reprinted with permission from the author.

is not the gospel itself, but is a powerful implication of the gospel—a “gospel truth.” And understanding this gospel truth is part of conforming one’s thinking to the glorious Gospel.

(2) In Romans 8:1 we read, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Again, notice the argument. Paul is not here presenting the gospel itself but something that is true “now” because of the gospel. But the implication is stunning. When fully comprehended by a believer it will revolutionize their mental world and the gospel will function powerfully for them.

(3) Romans 8:32 is a favorite. “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things.” Notice those words “also” and “along with him.” They speak of something that grows out of the gospel. When people see the connection between the truth of the gospel itself (“He did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all”) and this gospel truth concerning God’s gracious provision of all that we need for our sanctification (cf. vv. 28-29), the gospel will function for the strengthening of their daily trust in God’s provision.

GOSPEL IMPLICATIONS

But not only is the gospel to shape our thinking, there are massive behavioral implications of the gospel as well. The gospel is not only to renew our minds, but to inform our conduct too. The Scriptures provide many examples of this gospel-informed living. In Gal. 2:14 Paul rebukes Peter for conduct that was “not in line with the truth of the Gospel” and in Phil. 1:27 he urges believers to “conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel.” In other words, one of the ways the gospel must function is by informing specific behaviors. Thus, we should read our Bibles with an eye toward detecting these connections. So, for example, when Paul appeals to the Corinthians to “flee from sexual immorality” he explicitly bases his appeal on the gospel—“you are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body” (1 Cor. 6:18-20). When he urges forgiveness he explicitly references the gospel as both motivation and model (Eph. 4:32). When he tells husbands to love their wives he does so by linking his exhortation directly to the gospel (Eph. 5:25). When he calls the Corinthians to an ongoing generosity he explicitly reminds them of God’s generosity in the gospel (2 Cor. 8:7,9; 9:12-13, 15). Many more examples could be given. Ultimately, all Christian behavior should flow out of the gospel; while working hard to avoid triteness, connections should be made to every area of life.

One of the greatest challenges and most important tasks of the pastor-teacher is to clearly show these connections so that people can specifically and intelligently bring the gospel to bear on both their thinking and conduct. Thus the gospel becomes functionally central to the individual Christian and to the local church.

APPENDIX 11 | FOUR LIBERATING TRUTHS⁸

BY TIM CHESTER AND STEVE TIMMIS

Law says, “You should...”—You should not sleep with your boyfriend; You should read your Bible every day; You should not get drunk; You should witness to your friends; You should not lose your temper. Does any of that sound familiar? That is not good news, not to someone struggling with those issues. It is condemnation.

What the gospel says is this: “You need not...”—You need not get drunk, because Jesus offers a better refuge; You need not lose your temper, because God is in control of the situation. That is good news! Sin makes promises. The gospel exposes those promises as false promises and points to a God who is bigger and better than anything sin offers. That is good news.

FOUR LIBERATING TRUTHS FOR THOSE WE PASTOR

To help pastor our own hearts and to pastor one another, we want to highlight four liberating truths about God. Most of our sinful behavior and negative emotions arise because we are not believing one of these four truths as we should. Behind every sin is a lie about God. In Romans 1:24-25 Paul says:

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

We exchange the truth about God for a lie. And because we do not believe in God as we should, something else comes to matter more to us than God. Sin is always the result of misplaced affections. Sin makes promises. When we believe those promises, we think sin offers more than God. This lie warps our affections. Our love, our delight, our fear, and our hope become misplaced.

This does not necessarily mean that we are heretics or untaught. We are not talking about confessional belief, but functional belief. Most of our problems arise not because we need new truth that we do not yet have (though sometimes this is the case), but because we need truths we already know pushed down into the everyday realities of our lives. We need to feel in our hearts the truth we already know in our heads.

So our role as those committed to pastoring one another is to speak the truth to one another in the everyday realities of our lives. If we can identify the lie behind the sin, then we can speak the truth more effectively into others' lives. This is the truth that will, as Jesus promised, set them free. We need to ask ourselves: What is the lie and what is the corresponding gospel promise? What is substituting for Jesus and what is the corresponding truth about Jesus that offers hope? The following four liberating truths about God (“four Gs”) target nearly all our sinful behavior and negative emotions.

⁸ Taken from Everyday Church by Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, © 2012, pp. 75-79. North American edition published by Crossway. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.

1) GOD IS GREAT, SO WE DO NOT HAVE TO BE IN CONTROL.

We often want to be in control, so we dominate, manipulate, or overwork people. Or we fear things being out of control, so we worry. But God is sovereign. He is in control. Things may not always go the way we want, but God is in control, and he uses everything that happens to us for our good.

2) GOD IS GLORIOUS, SO WE DO NOT HAVE TO FEAR OTHERS.

We often sin because we crave the approval of other people or fear their rejection. The Bible calls this the “fear of man” (Prov. 29:25). We live to please other people, or we are controlled by peer pressure. The Bible's answer is the fear of God. God is the glorious one whom we should fear. He is the one whose approval matters most, and he is the one whose approval we have in Jesus Christ.

3) GOD IS GOOD, SO WE DO NOT HAVE TO LOOK ELSEWHERE.

Sin often leads to pleasure, but its pleasures are empty and temporary. Only God brings true and lasting joy. The pleasures of sin are quick and immediate. So we need faith to turn to God for lasting joy.

4) GOD IS GRACIOUS, SO WE DO NOT HAVE TO PROVE OURSELVES.

Many people act out of a desire to prove themselves. On the surface they may look impressive because they achieve many things or live good lives, but when things go well they are proud, and when things go badly they are crushed. They may look down on others because this makes them feel better about themselves or become bitter when their hard work is not rewarded in the way they want. It is also this desire that makes us determined to win an argument. The good news is that, while we can never justify ourselves before God, God has justified us through Jesus Christ. Jesus has done it all, so we have nothing left to prove.

People might get angry because they do not believe that *God is great*, that he is in control. They may believe in the providence of God in theory, but in practice they are not trusting God to provide for their needs. So when things go wrong they get angry. They feel the need to be in control, and when life is not under their control (as will be the case sooner or later), they get angry.

Or they may be angry because they do not believe that *God is glorious*. Of course, on Sunday they sing that he is robed in majesty, but on Monday morning their boss is the one they fear. Their boss looms large in their mind, eclipsing God. They are desperate for the approval of their boss, so when they have a bad day or a colleague lets them down, they become angry. The anger is an expression of their fear. The biblical answer is not to try to fear their boss less but to fear God more—to see God in his glory, majesty, holiness, love, and beauty so that God eclipses their boss. That is the word we need to speak to them.

Or they may be angry because they do not believe *God is good*. They are not looking to God for satisfaction, so they look elsewhere—to their work, their leisure, their family, their possessions, their girlfriend, or the girlfriend they wish they had. And if any of those things are threatened, they become angry.

Or they may be angry because they do not believe *God is gracious*. Maybe they have a contractual view of their relationship with God. They think that if they live an obedient life then God will bless them. They give up things for God and think God owes them in return.

They may have a particular blessing in mind. They may long for a husband and think God will provide one if they live a good life. When God does not provide the blessing they want, they become embittered. They may not articulate that as anger against God; it may be an ill-defined resentment, or they may lash out randomly at people. But underneath it all is an anger against God. They need to rediscover the grace of God. God does not treat us on a contractual basis. Or, rather, he does, but that contract is the new covenant under which he forgives our sins on the basis of the blood of his Son. We do not get what we deserve, because what we deserve is hell. What we get instead is God himself.

Speaking these truths does not mean simply saying, "You just need to fear God more." These truths are not to be wielded like accusations along the lines of "Your problem is you don't believe God is great." That is not good news. Instead we are called to portray God to one another in all his glory and beauty and majesty. It means singing songs and telling stories that speak of his glory and then making the connections to everyday life. It means presenting the truth in a way that captures the imagination. The framework of these four liberating truths is just a diagnostic tool kit. Do not be satisfied with repeating the bald statements that God is great, glorious, good, and gracious. Draw upon all your knowledge of the Bible story, all the texts you have memorized, and all the hymns and songs you know to express these truths with color and texture.

Notice, too, how a symptom (in this case anger) does not automatically equate to one specific truth. People are complicated. What is more, they have all sorts of issues going on in their hearts at the same time. The heart is deceitful above all things. We will need to explore presenting issues with people to discern their underlying issues. Misplaced affections are rarely revealed on Sunday mornings when people are on their best behavior. That is why sharing life in the context of everyday life is so vital. This is when our hearts are revealed: when we face the pressures of life or in our interaction with other people in the Christian community with whom we find it hard to live.

But here is comforting news. Speaking the truth about God will do no harm. You may not precisely identify what is going on in others' hearts. If they need to hear God is gracious, and you remind them that God is great, then you may not get it right, but you will not get it wrong! No one will be damaged by being reminded that God is their heavenly Father or that he is gracious.

What is more, while we may not be able to discern the inner workings of a person's heart, God's Word does its own analysis:

The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Heb. 4:12-13)

The Spirit of God is the counselor. When we speak the Spirit-inspired Word of God, the Spirit uses that Word to search the heart and counsel the heart. "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple" (Ps. 19:7).

APPENDIX 12 | IDENTIFYING IDOLS OF THE HEART

"The human heart is a factory of idols... Everyone of us is, from his mother's womb, expert in inventing idols." - John Calvin

DESIRES — THE THRONE OF YOUR HEART

Our hearts are ruled by the objects of our desire.

Jesus revealed two crucial points about how our hearts work when he said, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money" (Matthew 6:24).

When we think about service or obedience to a master, we likely think in terms of commands and directives. But is that how we relate to money, by taking orders from it? Jesus identifies our master as *that which we love* and *that to which we are devoted*. Our master is whatever we desire the most, and we serve or obey our master by seeking to enjoy the benefits the master promises.

Second, Jesus warns that the human heart can only love one master at a time. It's not that we *experience* only one desire at a time, but rather that we can *obey* only one desire at a time. I may desire to lose weight *and* desire to eat another donut, but my actions will indicate which desire rules my life.

Steve Fuller said, "Whatever I trust the most to satisfy me, I desire the most; and whatever I desire the most, I obey." To make sense of why we do what we do, we must identify what we desire. Internal desire is the seed of external sin. Just consider what James says:

"But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death."

- James 1:14-15

"What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask."

- James 4:1-2

James implies that the things we desire are not always sinful things. (Otherwise, why would he encourage us to ask God in prayer for what we desire?) The problem is not always that we desire bad things, but that we desire things so badly. In other words, our desires are disordered, or as Augustine would say, we experience *inordinate affections*.

In *Idols of the Heart and "Vanity Fair"* David Powlison says,

"[The] most basic question which God continually poses to each human heart [is this:] Has something or someone besides Jesus the Christ taken title to your heart's trust, preoccupation, loyalty, service, fear and delight? It is a question bearing on the immediate motivation for one's behavior, thoughts, and feelings. In the Bible's conceptualization, the motivation question is the lordship question. Who or what 'rules' my behavior, the Lord or a substitute?"

“CHECK ENGINE” LIGHTS

Think about negative emotions or attitudes of unbelief as a “Check Engine” light that indicates a problem in the thoughts and desires of our hearts. When the “Check Engine” light illuminates on your dashboard, it signals that there's a problem in the engine. There are ways to turn the light off without fixing the problem in the engine, but that would lead to more serious consequences down the road. Likewise, any attempt to alleviate the negative emotions of our hearts without addressing the underlying idolatrous desires will be a short-term change. Here are a couple of tools for diagnosing the heart-problem so that we can experience genuine repentance and renewed faith in Jesus.

Tim Keller summarizes our idolatrous desires under four categories: power, approval, comfort, and control.⁹ Our desires can be boiled down to these categories because the thing we desire usually isn't the ultimate thing we desire. Imagine four different people consumed with desire for money. It's tempting to think that money is the idol, but beneath the desire for money is an underlying desire for the power, approval, comfort, or control that money promises.

Or what about sex? If someone's life is controlled by a desire for sex, getting to the root requires identifying the underlying motivation. One person may crave sex as a means to feel power over others, while someone else may desire sex in order to feel comfort.

Keller suggests that another way to identify the desire ruling in our hearts is to identify our greatest nightmare, our problem emotion, or the way our sin affects those around us.

- If you seek **power**, you may fear **humiliation**, you may struggle with **anger**, and those around you may feel **used**.
- If you seek **approval**, you may fear **rejection**, you may struggle with **cowardice**, and those around you may feel **smothered**.
- If you seek **comfort**, you may dread **stress** or **demands**, you may struggle with **boredom**, and those around you may feel **neglected**.
- If you seek **control**, you may dread **uncertainty**, you may struggle with **worry**, and those around you may feel **condemned**.¹⁰

⁹ Tim Keller, *The Gospel in Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 44.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Daniel Fuller writes about ten attitudes of unbelief¹¹ that indicate a worship problem in our hearts. When we recognize the presence of one or more of these emotions, the remedy is to repent (turning away from sinful desire/unbelief) and believe (turning toward God and all that he promises).

- FALSE GUILT OR MISPLACED SHAME
- ANXIETY
- DESPAIR OR DESPONDENCY
- PRIDE
- COVETOUSNESS
- JEALOUSY OR ENVY
- BITTERNESS
- LUST OR INDULGENT DESIRES
- LAZINESS
- IMPATIENCE

REPENTANCE & FAITH

Repentance and faith is the process of forsaking a controlling desire for a false god in order to be ruled by desire for the true God. We have this encouraging promise in 1 John 1:9:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The Greek word translated "confess" is *homologeō*, which means to say the same thing with someone else. When we confess our sins, we agree with God and say the same thing about our sin that he says. Sin is always specific because it is always a failure to trust specific promises and to obey specific commands by faith. Specific sins have specific names (e.g., gossip, rivalry, fits of anger, drunkenness, etc.), so our repentance should always name the sin that we are confessing. Additionally, since repentance involves turning away from whatever we are trusting that isn't God, our prayers of repentance should involve confessing the lies that we are believing about God and the desires we are feeling for things that aren't God. For example,

"Father, I confess that I have acted impatiently and manipulatively toward others because I have desired to control my circumstances myself. I have acted like you are distant, unloving, and weak. But that's not who you are. Forgive me for believing these lies about you and for acting in these sinful ways. I do believe that you have drawn near to me, that you loved me even before I loved you, and that you are sovereignly working all things for my good. You proved that to me at the cross, where Jesus died for me. Give me the grace to treasure Jesus and to rest in your perfect control more than I desire to be in control myself."

¹¹ Daniel Fuller, *Unity of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 279-297. See also John Piper, *Battling Unbelief* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2007).

RECOMMENDED READING & RESOURCES

GROWING IN ONE-ANOTHER CARE

BOOKS

A Theology of Christian Counseling by Jay Adams*

A Theology of Biblical Counseling by Heath Lambert*

Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands by Paul Tripp*

How People Change by Timothy Lane and Paul Tripp*

Trusting God by Jerry Bridges*

Fear, Worry, and Anxiety by Elyse Fitzpatrick*

When People are Big and God is Small by Ed Welch*

The Christian Counselor's Manual by Jay Adams*

How to Help People Change by Jay Adams*

Counseling the Hard Cases edited by Stuart Scott and Heath Lambert*

Competent to Counsel by Jay Adams*

Speaking the Truth in Love by David Powlison*

You Can Change by Tim Chester

Gospel Fluency by Jeff Vanderstelt

ONLINE RESOURCES

The Institute for Biblical Counseling & Discipleship (IBCD) Resource Library: **ibcd.org/resources/**. Or download the IBCD Resource App from the iOS App Store or Google Play.

IBCD Care & Discipleship Courses (listen for free): **ibcd.org/Series/care-discipleship-level-1/**; also on iTunes (**apple.co/1U1Vorf**) or in the IBCD Resource App.

The Cross and Criticism by Dr. Alfred Poirier (**peacemaker-ministries.mybigcommerce.com/content/The%20Cross%20and%20Criticism.pdf**)

Steve Fuller's blog series on living by faith and fighting the fight of faith: **livingbyfaithblog.com/living-by-faith/**

*Indicates title from the ACBC Approved Reading List for those working toward ACBC Certification.