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Session 1: Group Discussion Questions

1. Why did God create us?
2. What does it mean to be made in the image of God? How is man different from the rest of creation?
3. What are the implications of the fall of man on image?
4. What are other “images of God” discussed during the talk?
5. How does Jesus represent the imago Dei?

Session 1: Dig deeper

Image of God Scripture References

Genesis 1:27,28

Isaiah 43:7, Eph. 1:11-12 (created for God's glory)

1 Cor. 10:31 (We do all to the glory of God)

James 3:9

Redemption of Image

Rom. 8:29

Col. 1:15 & 3:10

2 Cor. 3:18

1 Cor. 15:49

1 John 3:2

Christ is the image of God

2 Cor. 4:4,6

Col 1:15

Phil. 2:6-8 "Because Christ existed in the form of God [synonymous with image of God], he did not regard his lofty status as an opportunity for self-aggrandizement but rather as a calling to do just the opposite: to empty himself, to humble himself, to take on the form of a slave, and to submit to a slave's death, even the unthinkably repellent death of a cross."
(Gospel Coalition Collection)

Creation as Image

Gen. 1:31; Ps. 19:1

Marriage as Image:

Gen 2:18; Gen. 1:28; Eph. 5:2

Church as Image

The church is seamlessly linked to Christ. If it is true that Christ is the true image of God then by implication the church is a partaker in that image and responsibility of imaging God. Christ is its head (Col 1:18) "The church reverberates with the resurrection power of Christ himself (Eph. 1:19-20). It personifies his love (Eph. 5:2). It manifests his fullness (Col. 2:9-10). It is a 'new man' measuring up to Christ himself (Eph. 4:14). It is both one and distinguished with Christ." (Gospel Coalition Booklet)

Week 1:
Session 2: Spiritual Disciplines

John 8:31-32 (NLT) “Jesus said to the people who believed in him, ‘You are truly my disciples if you keep obeying my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’ “

Overview

Our relationship with God is the basis of our discipleship, of our motivation and ability to serve one another and advance the kingdom of our Lord. Like most relationships with anything alive, but especially with God, there must be communication, trust, commitment, understanding and at least a few critical elements such as honesty and humility. None of these develop by themselves; they must be desired and nurtured into maturity.

These training sessions are firstly intended to remind us of what is really important in our Christian sojourn. Training alone does not produce great disciples, great volunteers. Training needs our heartfelt partnership, we must work with the information we are given and allow the Spirit of God to affect us deeply within. There must be inner transformation along with an expanding knowledge.

Our relationship with God needs to be set, like a diamond in a ring, within four sets of spiritual disciplines. These sets overlap in life, but each set is useful for setting up our spiritual - devotional profile.

Spiritual Disciplines Set #1

These disciplines are the starting gate for the race of faith. In themselves they become like a second instinct, or set of instinctive responses. Our spiritual instinct must be to be prayerful, turn to the Bible for the feeding of our faith and for God’s voice to speak into our lives.

Prayer

Patience!	Psalm 27:14; Isaiah 40:31
Believing or feeling?	Exodus 4:5; Psalm 106:4+5
Habit	1 Timothy 5:17
All the time	Psalm 77:2
Time and place	Psalm 55:17

5. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the least and 10 the most, rate the degree to which you hold the Bible to have significant authority in your life.

6. Using the same scale, rate the extent to which you allow the Bible to determine your moral decisions.

7. Using the same scale, rate the degree to which the Bible influences your giving to the church.

Spiritual Disciplines Set #2

These are the basic building blocks of faith. Abraham exhibited all of these traits in his life.

Obedience

The commands Mark 1:27; Luke 8:25; Deut. 12:14; Jeremiah 1:17

Trust

The promises Psalm 9:10; Hebrews 2:13

Commit

To the mission Proverbs 16:3; Matthew 4:19; John 21:22

Review:

1. In 25 words or less, what do people mean when they refer to someone as “a man (or woman) of faith”.

2. Other than Abraham, identify other biblical characters who, in your view, had and exercised faith. Justify your selection in 25 words or less.

3. What is wrong with “I apologize”?
 4. What is the difference between “Godly sorrow” and “worldly sorrow”?
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5. Have you ever had to forgive someone even though they never confessed or admitted any wrongdoing?

Spiritual Discipline Set #4

These disciplines are necessary for our ongoing journey with God as we mature and seek His will in ministry and key life responsibilities, such as marriage and parenting.

Walking with God

Genesis 3:8; Luke 1:6

Keeping step
Keeping up

Listening to God

Find your own texts!

Hearing
Understanding

Responding to God

Find your own texts!

Listening before doing
Doing commanded work

Review:

1. In 25 words or less, describe your understanding of what it means to ‘walk with God’.

2. When did you last ‘walk with God’?

3. In 50 words or less describe this ‘walk’.

4. How does God typically speak to you?

5. How does God typically lead you?

6. How does God typically get your attention when you aren't listening?

Session 3: Dig deeper

Read Luke 15:11-32

Pastor and author Tim Keller, states that, “there are three ways in which we can relate to God: religion, irreligion, and the gospel.” By seeking to keep control of our own lives we look to everything else besides God for our righteousness. The “religious” are often performance based, believing that their moral good keeps them in God’s favor. For them, salvation is conditional and they often say or think things like; “if I stop doing, x, then God will love and accept me”, “when I don’t obey he scolds me”, “I am unworthy, undeserving, disgraceful”, “He does not hear my prayers, or will not answer them”, “how can I serve when I am not fit or good enough?” The religious are mired in condemnation; their very effort to keep the law hinders them, and leads to further condemnation. If not spinning their wheels in the muck of condemnation they may swing to the other extreme and become the pious, self-righteous people who look down at others not living to their standards. In contrast, the irreligious don’t repent at all. Instead they live a life with the motto, “I do what I want”, or, “you cant tell me what to do”. The gospel says; we are loved and accepted, we are just and made right because of the price Jesus paid to free us. We cannot earn grace because it is a free gift from God, once we grasp this reality we see that our identity in Christ. The gospel says, “I am loved, therefore I must love others”. (Section adopted from Gospel in Life Curriculum)

1. What do you notice about the two brothers? What are their similarities and differences?
2. How is the older brother “religious” and the younger brother “irreligious”?
3. How does the father in Luke illustrate God’s love?
4. You can rebel against God and be alienated from him either by breaking all his rules or by keeping all of them diligently; how does this parable illustrate this?

Week 2: Session 1: Prepare For Ministry

1.1 Priorities (evaluating your own spiritual journey) *(From Pastor Mark Driscoll's Re:Train session, "The Last Day")*

2 Timothy 4:7-8 "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing."

The Bible uses a constellation of words to exhort perseverance. Among them are overcome, endure, persevere, and abide. Not surprisingly, many New Testament books close with the call to perseverance:

Matthew 28:20 "to the end of the age"

1 Corinthians 16:13 Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.

Galatians 6:9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

Ephesians 6:18 keep alert with all perseverance

Colossians 4:2 Continue steadfastly in prayer

2 Thessalonians 3:13 As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

1 Tim 6:12-14 Fight the good fight of the faith... until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ

2 Timothy 4:18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom.

James 5:7-8 Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient.

1 Peter 5:12 this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.

2 Peter 3:17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.

Jude 24-25 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

4 Ways to Live Your Life

In his book *Leading On Empty*, Wayne Cordero says that there are only four ways to live your life:

Reaction – passively dominated by urgencies & pushy people

Conformity – succumbing to the fear of man and just being and doing what everyone else

wants which is not necessarily following God's will for you personally

Independence – nonconforming rebellion in the name of freedom marked by doing only what you want and ignoring godly authority over you

Intentionality – reverse engineering your life & living it prayerfully & purposefully journaling your thoughts throughout the day and using silence and solitude to hear from God and organize your life.

Which one of these four most typifies you?

Is your life a frazzled mess because you are perpetual reaction mode?

Have you not really even deeply pondered God's will for your life but just done what you were told by other people?

Are you the sort of person who is defiant, independent, and self-reliant?

Or, do you regularly (e.g. at least one hour a week and one day a month) get silence and solitude with God to work on your life before you work in it?

4 Ways to Change Your Life

Priestly heart change – conviction from God & Repentance from you

Prophetic study – research and fact finding for how to change your life, which includes reading the Bible, books, speaking with people you know who have wisdom etc.

Kingly plan – ongoing detailed prayerful life organization

Action – working your plan & making changes as life requires

- a. Moleskine - always keeping a journal like this nearby to jot notes, thoughts, and convictions in
- b. Journaling – using your laptop to gather the scattered ideas in your Moleskine and prayerfully and carefully add to and consider them
- c. Calendar – take action items from your silence and solitude day and put them on the calendar as nothing that is officially planned ever gets done to completion

Most people are good at one or two of these steps. Some have a heart change and do their homework but do not make a plan and take action to change their life. Others have plans and action but are religiously just doing duties because they have not experienced heart change from God. Others move from heart change to action and without research and a plan they mean well but make their life (e.g. health, finances, relationships) worse. Take some time and be honest with yourself. List each of these steps in order from the one you are strongest at to the one you are weakest at.

1. Where is your life getting stuck and what can you do to grow where you are weak?

2. Who do you need to talk to learn from?
3. What do you need to repent of?

1.2 Being a Good Caretaker

Reverse-Engineering Principles

- ❖ You have work appointed to you by God.
 - Ephesians 2:8–10 *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*
 - John 5:36 *For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.*
- ❖ You need a wise plan to do your work.
 - Proverbs 21:5 *The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.*
- ❖ Your plan needs to include outside counsel.
 - Proverbs 15:22 *Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.*
- ❖ Your plan must be biblical and prayerful.
 - Proverbs 16:3 *Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.*
- ❖ Your plan will change as God leads you.
 - Proverbs 16:9 *The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.*

Reverse Engineering Plans

Your plan must be written down.

Consider the downside.

Include fun & margin for error.

Account for your priorities.

Accept the size of your plate and fill it.

Take something off your plate whenever something is put on.

Use technology but do not allow it to rule your life.

Sync your plan with your family.

Use simple systems & write everything in one place.

Seek planning principles from wise people.

Get a life coach if you can.

(Adapted from Pastor Mark Driscoll's Re:Train session, "Reverse Engineering Family & Ministry")

Reverse engineering means defining your life forward, living your life backward. If you are married, it is important to begin this process united and together (otherwise one spouse is reverse engineering while the other is just plowing forward as normal). If you are single, use this season of your life to get things in order and set Godly priorities that you can carry into your marriage and family.

Who is coaching you? Who have you intentionally invited into your life to speak wisdom, bring rebuke when necessary, and share encouragement through Scripture? This does not “just happen”...you must intentionally pursue it. It is vital that you do not put all your eggs in one basket by having only a single mentor; instead have a diverse group who can each speak specifically into areas of your life (i.e. marital, financial, ministry, etc).

Caretaker of your time:

- Set aside 1-2 hours per week to review your weekly/monthly schedule
- Schedule into your monthly calendar one day a month to have a “personal day away”
- Schedule regular exercise and extracurricular activities
- Plan and strategize for your marriage and family, not just for your work or ministry

1.3 Balance

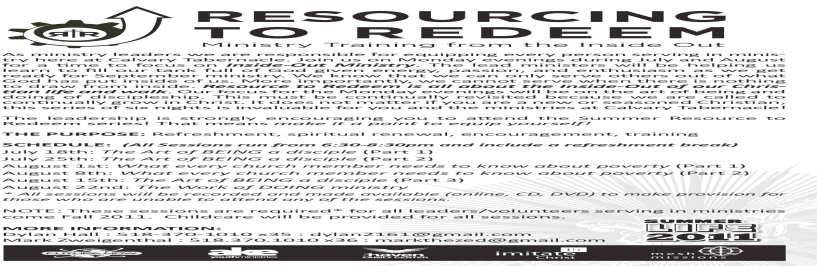
“This is all very nice information, but my life is not structured like this...there’s just too many variables that don’t make it nice and neat...”

True, but if we never take a few steps back and look at the big picture of our lives, then we will never be the most fruitful servants of Christ that we can be. Remember, our lives are “but a breath”...let’s do all we can to make the most of it for Jesus!

Action Steps:

1. What are your priorities in life?
2. What are three major issues that distract you from being most God-honoring with your life?
3. What two things can you do to add a greater level balance and fruitfulness in your life over the next month (relationship with God, marriage, family, work, ministry)?
4. Review your calendar.
 - a. When do you spend time with Jesus (reading the Word, specific prayer, journaling) each day? Is it even logged into your calendar?
 - b. When do you prepare for your ministry times?

- c. Where do you have specific times set aside for family/friends?
- d. Is exercise scheduled into your calendar?
- 5. List 3-4 people that are coaching/disciplining you in life. If you do not have these people in place, who are 3-4 people you can invite into this intentional role in your life?



Week 2: Session 3: Functioning As Part Of A Team

Ephesians 4:1-16 “We all desire to live lives that are both **fruitful** and **fulfilled**.”

3.1 Common goal

1. Team Before Me
2. Know ‘The Score’.
3. Stay Focused on the Team’s Goal

John Maxwell says it well:

“Anyone who doesn’t know what’s important to the team not only fails to contribute to the team, but actually prevents the team from achieving success”

Questions:

1. What are some possible personal ‘agendas’ that team members can have that would have a negative impact on the team?
2. What are the effects of misdirected passion and energy?
3. How does a team stay united in purpose?

3.2 Cooperation

“Teams that don’t bond, can’t build.”

John Maxwell

1. People want to feel valued and cared for

For a team to be successful the team members must know that their team members care about them, their families, and their calling.

1 Corinthians 10:31-33

Matthew 20:25-28

As members of Christ’s body, we give up the right to put ourselves first. A team works most effectively when people consider others greater than them selves.

2. Caring leads to chemistry

When teams begin to care about each other, they get to know each other better. They begin to appreciate each others strengths and weaknesses and these realizations help build good team chemistry. Chemistry is created when team members become reliant on each other (for different contributions to the team goal) and build relationships based on trust.

If we don’t care for each other within our leadership teams, we can’t expect the people we lead to care about each other. What we practice here is what we’ll live out there (it doesn’t matter what we say).

Questions:

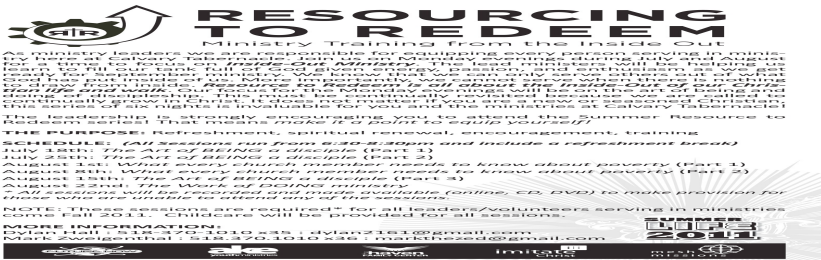
1. What are some ways in which team members on a team can be selfish?

2. What are some characteristics of a healthy team?

THOUGHTS:

REFLECTION:

INTROSPECTION:



Week 3:
Session 2: Expression of Mission
Esther & Mordecai

We must have the proper _____ in mission.

Mission is the reason we are still alive post-_____

We must _____ our mission so nothing takes away from it.

How do we _____ in everyday life?

Mordecai or Esther did not shirk their responsibilities for the sake of their Mission - they _____ their responsibilities to effect their mission.

Mordecai never relented - everyday he was _____ for the king AND of Esther.

Esther 2:19-23

Even though the king was not the king of Israel, he was the king over Israel and many would justify - perhaps even applaud Mordecai if he didn't warn Ahasuerus.

Mordecai _____ his king - after all, they are only _____.

Romans 12:10 - "Out do one another in showing *Honor*"

**"Who knows whether or not you have attained royalty _____
_____?"** Esther 4:14

It is up to us to _____ what we are going to do with what God has given us.

The reality is, the time we truly die is when someone says our name for the _____.

Let's do a little exercise:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____

Mission Requires _____: it's not about getting through life making as few _____ as possible.

What _____ am I leaving for God?

What _____ am I taking that will generate major pay-off in the Kingdom that isn't mine but I am no less a part of?

Esther 10...

Opposites _____: God uses the exact person we wouldn't think to use in order to accomplish _____ purpose.

REFLECTIONS:
