

WHOLENESS HANDOUT COMPILATION



GREENHOUSE
SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

MODULE 1

Lesson 1

Introduction: Why Wholeness

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24
The Passion Translation

²³ Now, may the God of peace and harmony set you apart, making you completely holy. And may your entire being—spirit, soul, and body—be kept completely flawless in the appearing of our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One. ²⁴ The one who calls you by name is trustworthy and will thoroughly complete his work in you.

God wants us completely holy. He wants our entire being -spirit, soul and body – to be kept completely flawless in the appearing of our Lord Jesus. He is the God of peace and harmony.

3 Books: Emotionally Healthy Spirituality; Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Workbook; Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Day by Day

DAILY OFFICE

I want you to learn a new discipline. This is what Pete calls the “Daily Office”. Daily Office is a practice or discipline that the early church used to slow down so they could develop their own relationship with Jesus. It will introduce us to silence, solitude, and rhythms in a world that never stops. Daniel stopped 3 times a day to pray and BE with God (Daniel 6:10). And this is what we are trying to do here. It is a way to stop and slow down, in the middle of our busy and packed day in order to pay attention to God throughout the entire day. Prayer was the framework for the day, and everything else in their lives was ordered around it. People from ancient Israelites to first-century disciples and early Christian leaders like Benedict realized that stopping to be with God, by means of the Daily Office, was the key to creating a continual and easy familiarity with God’s presence. Let’s practice this together. Morning/midday, Midday/evening.

Lesson 2

Wholeness Fluency

We long for people to be whole, in spirit, soul, and body.

Central to wholeness is a passion for integrity, and a demand for holiness and freedom. We call for leaders who are greater on the inside than on the outside. We take our cue from the apostle Paul: “Therefore, most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2 Corinthians 12:9) Because a leader’s strengths will automatically be on public display, it requires intentionality to honestly communicate weakness and vulnerability. This demands courage and inner

strength to help foster a culture where people can come just as they are, without being judged. Leaders must live lives of wholeness, and then be able to effectively lead others to do the same. Ongoing wholeness will ultimately be the result of beholding and abiding in Jesus.

Authenticity, however, is not enough. Jesus did not come to make us real; He came to save His people from their sin.

Becoming Whole In Jesus:

2 Corinthians 7:1: Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

Colossians 3:23-24: Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

1 Peter 2:16: Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves.

Proverbs 20:7: The righteous lead blameless lives, blessed are their children after them.

2 Timothy 1:9-10: He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

2 Corinthians 3:17: Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Wholeness calls for Integrity

Read: Luke 12:42-48, 1 Peter 3:16, Luke 16:10-15, Acts 24:14-16, Col 3:23-24, Proverbs 10:9, 11:3, 20:7

The word integrity comes from the Latin word integer, which means whole or complete. Thus integrity is the consistency of character, honesty, truthfulness of one's actions, values, and principles whether in front of an audience or behind closed doors. It is a personal choice of not compromising the word of God by doing the right thing all the time, no matter the context.

We are to recognize the pitfalls of spiritual leadership. Leaders are particularly vulnerable to pride. This is why we are reminded not to place people into leadership too quickly (1 Timothy 3:6). It is extremely possible to be more gifted than godly – and this is a dangerous reality. We are to remember the long list of gifted men and women who possessed great ability with faulty character. Their ministries came tumbling down.

God is not looking for people who are the most talented, or more gifted. He has all the resources and is the Giver of every good gift. Rather, God is looking for people who recognize that apart from Him they are, have, and can do nothing. A man or woman whom the Lord will find doing the right thing even

while the master is away (Luke 12:42-48). However, we also recognize that we fall short every day, and anyone then who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins (James 4:17). Integrity is proven when a righteous man falls seven times, yet he chooses to rise again (Proverbs 24:16). We rise by humbling ourselves, and owning up to our actions and their consequences, as seen by King David when he was approached by the prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 12:1-14), for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).

We should live in such a way that people cannot question our motives, morals or lifestyle, as we set apart Christ as Lord, even when it's difficult. This requires vulnerability and transparency. Everything we do should point back to Christ and the change He has made in our heart (1 Timothy 3:1-7).

Discuss:

- Why is integrity essential to the Christian life?
- What are the elements of integrity and how do you measure it?
- Describe a situation when you showed integrity by doing the right thing even though it was difficult, or when nobody was watching.
- As a leader, people won't always do what you say, but they will follow what you do. Do your actions align with your words?
- Is there ever a time when you should bend the rules a little? If so, when?
- Ask the Lord daily to search your heart and to reveal any areas of your life that He would find compromising (Psalm 139:23-24). Seek to repent and ask the Lord for His grace to align your thoughts, actions, and motives with His will.

Wholeness calls for Holiness

Read: 2 Corinthians 7:1, Hebrews 12:14, 1 Peter 1:13-16, Philippians 4:8, Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 5:1-3

But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy" (1 Peter 1:13-16). From the very beginning God has been calling His people to be set apart for holiness. However because we live in a fallen world where Satan perverts every good thing, we have to renew our minds daily, being self controlled as we set our hope and gaze fully on the grace of God, being careful not to underestimate God's holiness because of His abundant grace and mercy, for He is a God to be revered and feared.

We will not gloss over the seriousness of sin or the constant temptation to religious pride. This means we deal with both lawless unrighteousness and legalistic self-righteousness. We must be fluent in dealing with darkness in Biblically effective ways, turning our eyes from worthless things as we submit to God, and resisting the devil so that he will flee (James 4:7). We recognize that all sin problems are worship problems as we set up some functional lord and savior instead of the true Lord and Savior, Jesus.

This means we look at fruit, but we deal with roots. We follow the fruit trail to the bottom of a pile where we find our idols. We ask questions about our sin: Why are we lying? Why are we giving in to sexual immorality? Why do we overwork for money?

Discuss:

- What does it mean to be holy?
- What does it look like in your life to pursue holiness?

- Can you obtain holiness and if so, how do you know that you've obtained it?
- What kind of accountability have you set in place, and why is this important?

Wholeness calls for Freedom

Read: John 8:31-38, Galatians 5:1, 1 Peter 2:16, Romans 8:1-8, Colossians 3, 2 Corinthians 10:5

To the Jews who had believed Him, 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" (John 8:31-32). Jesus came to set the captives free and gives us eternal and abundant life that begins when we enter into a relationship with Him! His yolk is easy, and the burden is light, and in Him we find rest. As far as the east is from the west so far has the Lord removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:12). There is therefore no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1), because He took on the full cup of God's wrath for our sins and on the cross declared, "It is finished." (John 19:30) He rose again on the third day and took back the keys of death and Hades (Revelation 1:18). It is for freedom that Christ has set us free, and therefore we do not return to the yoke of slavery, nor do we use our freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather we use our freedom to serve one another in love. (Galatians 5:13)

Though Satan has been defeated, as disciples we need to walk and live in that reality, while recognizing that until the Lord returns, we have a spiritual battle on our hands, but the Lord has equipped us with all authority to renounce Satan and his schemes and abide in the freedom we have in Christ (Ephesians 6:10-18, Galatians 5:16-25). Thus we still have to be alert to regularly evaluate our lives and expel anything that may be keeping us from getting closer to Christ. Just like a soldier has to prepare for battle through intense training, we as Christians have to continually sharpen our weapon and put on the full armor of Christ.

Jesus goes on to tell us that a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever, so whom the Son has set free is free indeed (John 8:35-36). This is great news, because similarly to if you are a parent, it doesn't matter where your child goes, or what he/she does, nothing can change the fact that your child is and will forever be part of your family. In the same way, we are God's sons and daughters, and nothing can change that! For the old has gone and the new has come and we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13-14). It is a privilege to share the goodness of the Lord with others around us by loving one another and allowing them to get a glimpse of the Kingdom within us.

"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

Discuss:

- What does it mean to be free in Christ and how do you walk in that freedom?
- In what specific ways are you using the freedom you have in Christ to bring about the most good for His glory?
- What draws you away from freedom?

Reflection & Application

In your own words, what is the big idea from this chapter?

Specifically ask yourself:

- What did I learn from this chapter?
- Lord, what do you want me to do about it?

Choose 1 or 2 Scriptures that impacted you to memorize this week.

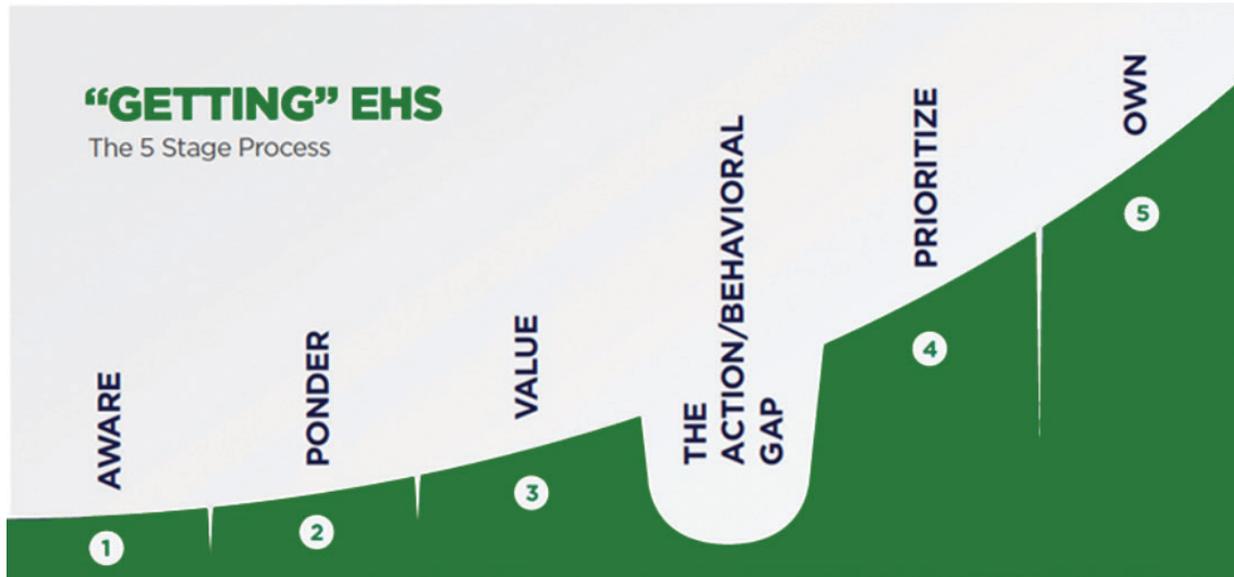
- Write out and journal through what the Lord is teaching you through these Scriptures specifically.
- How do you plan to apply the truth from these Scriptures this week?

Suggested books: The Dark Side of Leadership. Counterfeit Gods, The Pursuit of Holiness, The Spirit of the Disciplines. Victory Over the Darkness. I Give You Authority

MODULE 2

Lesson 3

The Problem with Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality



Benjamin Bloom, a great educational psychologist, along with a team of thinkers, developed a brilliant taxonomy that describes how people learn in different domains. This has been adapted and revised many times over the last sixty years and continues to be a standard in many educational systems around the world. Bloom distinguishes five levels of knowing, or “getting,” a value. We tend to think in one of two ways: I know something, or I don’t know something. For example, I value caring for the poor or I don’t value caring for the poor. What we don’t always understand is it takes a long time — and many small incremental steps — to really “get” a new value.

In fact, it requires moving through five distinct levels. Let me illustrate this with my own journey of coming to value slowing down my life to spend more time with Jesus.

1. Awareness: “Slowing down is an interesting idea.” I first thought about this in a serious way in 2009 when I was experiencing pain in both my personal life and in my leadership.

2. Ponder: “Help me understand more about slowing down.” When I started the emotionally healthy journey in 2012, I read books, listened to messages on slowing down, and talked about it in with friends and Microchurches.

3. Value: “I really believe it is important for everybody to slow down.” I dabbled in a few new behaviors like Sabbath, solitude, and one-day retreats with God, but my actions and behaviors didn’t fundamentally change. For years.

4. Prioritize: “I am shifting my entire life around as I slow down to be with Jesus.” I started taking silence and solitude days in 2016, I reprioritized my time, energy, and schedule in order to integrate this new value every month. It helped me to kick-start a new way of leading and living out this value. It was life changing.

5. Own: “All my decisions and actions are based on this new value.” Moving from prioritizing to owning took me another two to four years. I had a lot of work to do to integrate this value with the demands and challenges of leading a family and helping pastor with Mike at Greenhouse. While I still fail at times, slowing down to be with Jesus now informs all I do. My entire body feels it when I, or others around me, violate this value.

You’ll notice that the chart highlights the large gap between levels three and four — value and prioritize. Why? Because that is the point that requires a radical, often difficult shift. Many leaders love the ideas and principles of emotionally healthy spirituality. However, moving from valuing to prioritizing is a big challenge. I understand why. So, let me encourage you. The changes you seek won’t happen overnight, but they will happen. Take your time. Read slowly. Entrust yourself to God’s care and ask him to lead you into the next step in your process. Thousands of leaders around the world are on the journey with you and have already begun to experience powerful transformation in both their personal lives and their leadership. Stay with it, taking one step at a time. Neither you, nor those you lead, will ever be the same.

Take some time to think through this tool to help you get from getting a new value to doing and embracing that new value.

MODULE 4

Lesson 1

Principle 2: Look Beneath the Surface

Only about 10 percent of an iceberg is visible above the surface. That is the part of our lives of which we are aware. These are the things we do that people can see – go to church, attend a Microchurch, be polite to one another, give financially, and so on. Deep beneath the surface of our lives, however, are layers of childhood wounds, unconscious motivations and fears, defenses, and memories/experiences we have forgotten.

Now I know that facing the truth can be hard. As human beings, God created us as complex and intricate creatures. We have many different aspects to who we are (emotional, spiritual, physical, intellectual, and social), but we also have different layers. In our daily decisions, all sorts of motivations, thoughts, and impulses are at work. Some we are conscious of, but others we are not. Ever since the fall, we human beings have been running away from the full truth about ourselves.

I want you to pause the video and reflect and journal about these two questions:

1. Although we know that the truth sets us free (John 8:32), Why do you think unmasked honesty is so difficult for people? In what ways or situations is it difficult for you?
2. Why do we need a personal experience of God's unconditional love for us in order to search the "deep insides" of our lives and come out of hiding?

Lesson 2

Principle 2: Look Beneath the Surface

What exactly does it look like to go beneath the surface for yourself and with others? There are four primary components:

1. Awareness of what you are feeling and doing
2. Asking the "why" (motivations) questions
3. Linking the gospel and emotional health
4. Getting rid of our "glittering images"

Jesus experienced a full range of human emotions through his earthly ministry.

- John 11:33 – he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved.
- John 11:33-36; Luke 19:41 – He wept at the gravesite of Lazarus and over the city of Jerusalem.
- Mark 10:14 – He was angry with his disciples.
- John 2:13-17 – He was furious at the crass commercialism in the temple.
- Matthew 8:10 – He showed astonishment.
- Luke 22:15 – He had emotional longing to be with the twelve apostles.
- Matthew 20:34; Mark 1:41; Luke 7:13 – He had compassion for widows, lepers and blind men.

We see in the Gospels how Jesus continually was calling people to look beneath the surface of their iceberg. He was regularly redirecting people to the "why's" of their behavior, to their motivations, and to their hearts.

Once I begin to be aware of what I am doing, how I am feeling and how it is impacting others, I need to ask myself the difficult “why” questions.

For example:

- Why am I always in a hurry? Why am I so impatient?
- Why am I so anxious?
- Why am I overly concerned that others tell me I’m ok as a leader or a teacher?
- Why am I so devastated that Rose told me after church on Sunday that she didn’t get anything out of my sermon?
- Why do I dread this meeting today at 2pm? Why am I so flooded with fear?
- Why am I over-concerned that I succeed in my ministry?
- Why do I avoid confronting difficult people at church?
- Why do I have a need to immediately return all phone calls and emails? Or why do I avoid returning certain phone calls, emails, or text messages?

Bringing a lot of these questions to the Lord has helped me to look deeper beneath the surface.

I want you to journal or meditate about these why questions and maybe engage with the Lord about a situation that happened recently and see if you could start looking beneath the surface of what’s going on.

MODULE 5

Lesson 3

Principle 3: Going back in order to go forward

How do I go back to move forward with the Lord?

1. We are going to identify how your family shaped you I want to lead you to do a simple genogram of the family in which God placed you. Here are some questions we can ask to attempt to get beneath the surface at how the past might be impacting the present. Fill out the genogram through the eyes of your childhood (as if between eight and twelve years old).

- Describe each family member with two or three adjectives (parents, caretakers, grandparents, siblings, children).
- Describe your parents' (caretakers') and grandparents' marriages.
- How was conflict handled in your extended family over two to three generations? Anger? Gender roles?
- What were some generational themes (e.g., addictions, affairs, losses, abuse, divorce, depression, mental illness, abortions, children born out of wedlock, etc.)?
- How well did your family do in talking about feelings?
- How was sexuality talked or not talked about? What were the implied messages?
- Were there any family "secrets" (such as a pregnancy out of wedlock, incest, or major financial scandal)?
- What was considered "success" in your family?
- How was money handled? Spirituality? Holidays? Relationships with extended family?
- How did your family's ethnicity shape you?
- Were there any heroes or heroines in the family? Scapegoats? "Losers"? Why?
- What kinds of addictions, if any, existed in the family?
- Were there traumatic losses in the past or present, such as sudden death, prolonged illnesses, stillbirths/ miscarriages, bankruptcy, or divorce?

This exercise, while painful, leads us to ask three essential questions if we are going to lead others with integrity.

1. What one or two patterns might emerge of how your family has impacted who you are today?
2. In what area(s) might you be shaping your life and your ministry according to your past rather than Christ's family?
3. What "hard work of discipleship" might you have before you?

All of us need to ask the hard questions to be free in Christ. As leaders we need to ask these questions first and lead out of the work of God in our own lives. You cannot give to others what you have not received yourself. You cannot teach others what you haven't learned and experienced yourself.

2. Discerning the major influences in your life

Outside of your family of origin, consider what have been the other major influences in your life. Some people get influenced by institutions they went to like schools whether they are Christian or not, Seminaries, Christian colleges etc. Other people are shaped by significant events such as divorce, sexual or emotional abuse, an addiction, a lengthy period of unemployment, a particular betrayal, or a friendship. The question to ask is, what are the few events or people that have impacted who I am today and that will help me understand What makes me tick?

3. Becoming reparented through the church

The critical factor that most significantly determines my new identity as a Christian is not the blood of my biological family but the blood of Jesus. We are given a new name (Christian), a new inheritance (freedom, glory, hope, resources a hundred-fold), a new power (the Holy spirit) to live in this new life. We become partakers of divine nature, able to enjoy the absolute security and stability, freedom, intimacy, and confidence in prayer of children in God's family. There is now a new dynamic in the life inside me, the life of Jesus.

I want you to begin working on your genogram. Take your time doing this. And when things get uncomfortable or painful, I need you to bring it to the Lord in prayer. Before you begin working on it, ask the Holy Spirit to lead you all the way. To give you courage to investigate things that might be uncomfortable and sinful. I pray peace over you!!

MODULE 6

Lesson 1

Principle 4: Live in Brokenness and Vulnerability

Flee: Some of us flee by burying our pain in some form of addictive behavior, avoiding life by focusing on only a small part of it. Many Christians suffer pain, but they run away from it or numb it. How many pastors numb the pain of life by becoming addicted to building their church? How many people zealously put their energy into a church ministry as a way of avoiding certain unpleasant relationships at home? How many females will bury themselves in caring for the children as a way of not looking honestly at other broken areas of their lives? How many men pour their life energy into succeeding at their professions while failing miserably at home?

Fight: Others of us become angry, bitter, and/or violent because life is not going our way. How many Christians need to deal with an anger that is close to their soul but instead put on the veneer of a spirituality – “a righteous indignation like Jesus,” as they wrongly describe it? They take their anger on misguided politicians and doctrinally imperfect Christians. Rather than be broken by the difficulties of life, I meet many in our churches who are angry at God for not answering their prayers or ruling the world in a way that seems wise.

Hide/Freeze: Still others of us build our lives in ways that cover up how damaged, cracked, fractured, frail, limited, and imperfect we are. This is what I did during one of my stuck seasons in my life. I was homeschooling and many younger moms would come for advice and I would brag about how great homeschooling was and what they should do and how they needed to organize themselves and their homes. When they would come feeling the exact way I was feeling I would tell the they needed to pray more and I would cover my pain by just giving advice and talking and being honest of my own state of frustration, feeling like homeschooling was the pits, and wondering if the Lord really loved me if this was all that life was about. As I looked later, focusing on my success was my tool to avoid looking honestly at how damaged, cracked, imperfect, phony, and limited I really was. It also gave me a false sense of worth and value that left me empty.

I want you to take some time and reflect and journal in which of the following situations do you tend to flee, fight, or freeze?

- Conflict or tension in your marriage/close friendships.
- A stressful deadline at work, home, or ministry.
- The unexpected end of a valued friendship.
- Financial uncertainty and stress.
- Misunderstanding with a coworker or friend.
- An indefinite setback of a personal dream or goal
- Add your own. Think of a recent scenario.

Did you flee, fight, or freeze?

Lesson 2

Principle 4: Live in Brokenness and Vulnerability

This list will help you evaluate your spirituality. Circle the answers that tends to describe you and prayerfully bring it to the Lord. Then, in the areas you were proud/defensive, can you think of a life experience that reinforced your need to respond in that manner (for example: a critical father, being misjudged, being gossiped about). Write it down and reflect.

TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE

Proud and Defensive

1. I am guarded and protective about my imperfections and flaws.
2. I focus on the “positive,” strong, successful parts of myself.
3. I am highly “offendable” and defensive.
4. I naturally focus first on the flaws, mistakes, and sins of others.
5. I give my opinion a lot, even when I am not asked.
6. I don’t get close to people.
7. I keep people from really seeing what is going on inside of me.
8. I like to control most situations.
9. I have to be right in order to feel strong and good
10. I blame others.
11. I often hold grudges and rarely ask forgiveness.
12. When I am offended, I write people off.
13. I deny, avoid, or withdraw from painful realities.
14. I give answers and explanations to those in pain, hoping to fix or change them.
15. I have to prove I am right when wronged.
16. I am demanding.
17. I am highly self-conscious and concerned about how others perceive me.
18. I see people as resources to be used for God.

Broken and Vulnerable

1. I am transparent and weak; I disclose myself to appropriate others.
2. I am aware of the weak, needy, limited parts of who I am, and I freely admit failure.
3. I am approachable and open to Input.
4. I am aware of my own brokenness. I have compassion and am slow to judge others.
5. I am slow to speak and quick to listen.
6. I am open, soft, and curious about others.
7. I delight in showing vulnerability and weakness, that Christ’s power may be seen.
8. I can let go and give people the opportunity to earn my trust.
9. I understand that God’s strength reveals itself in admitting mistakes, weakness, and statements that “I was wrong.”
10. I take responsibility for myself and speak mostly in the “I,” not the “you” or “they.”
11. I don’t hold people in debt to me and am able to ask others for forgiveness as needed.
12. When I am offended, I ask questions to explore what happened.
13. I honestly look at the truth underneath the surface, even when it hurts.
14. I am present with people in their pain, and am comfortable with mystery and with saying, “I don’t know.”
15. I can let things go.
16. I assert myself respectfully and kindly.
17. I am more aware of God and others than the impression I am making.
18. I see people as gifts to be loved and enjoyed.

Lesson 3

Principle 4: Live in Brokenness and Vulnerability

I want to remind you that the only kind of people God uses are those who do not depend on their own gifts or resources. We are all broken; we each compensate in different ways. I'm learning that leadership is not always being the strong one; instead, it is being the weak one who is made strong by God alone.

- Moses stuttered.
- David's armor didn't fit.
- John Mark deserted Paul.
- Timothy had ulcers.
- Hosea's wife was a prostitute.
- Amos's only training was farming.
- Jacob was a liar.
- David had an affair, murdered, and abused power.
- Naomi was a widow.
- Paul was a persecutor.
- Moses was a murderer.
- Jonah ran from God's will.
- Gideon and Thomas both doubted.
- Jeremiah was depressed and suicidal.
- Elijah was burned out.
- John the Baptist was a loudmouth.
- Martha was a worry wart.
- Noah got drunk.
- Solomon was too rich, and Jesus was too poor.
- Abraham was too old, and David too young.
- Peter was afraid of death, and Lazarus was dead.
- Moses had a short fuse (so did Peter, Paul, and lots of Bible heroes).

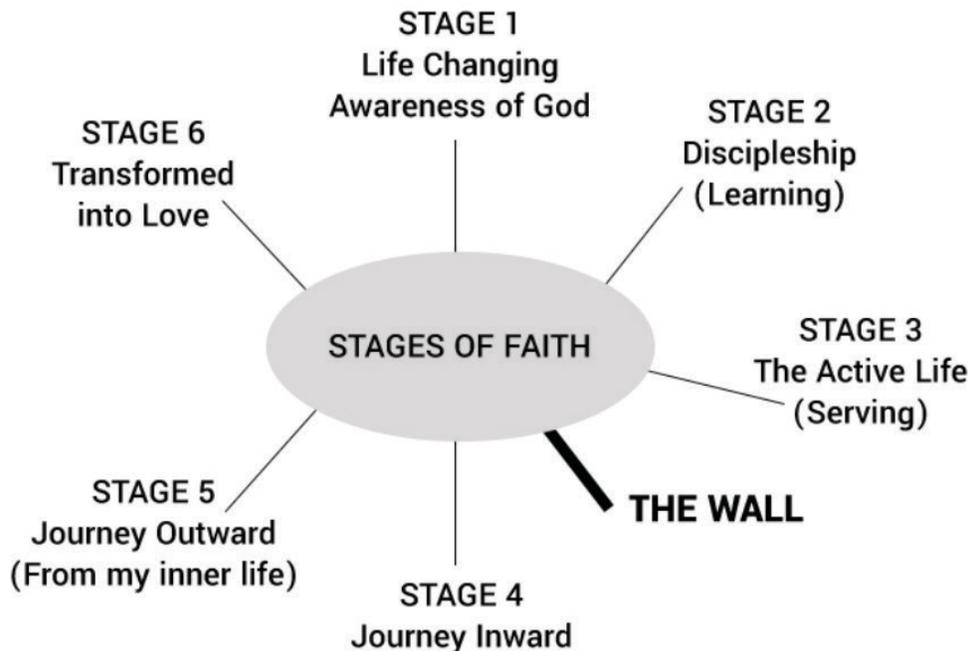
Lord shine your flashlight on these hard moments and show us where you were and where you are now. We embrace brokenness and vulnerability as a way to lead others into the same freedom we are gaining ourselves. Cover us Holy Spirit, In Jesus name, Amen

MODULE 7

Lesson 1

Principle 5: Journey Through the Wall

Emotionally healthy spirituality requires that you go through the pain of the Wall—or, as the ancients called it, “the dark night of the soul.” Just as a physical wall stops us from moving ahead, God sometimes stops us in our spiritual journey through a spiritual Wall in order to radically transform our character. Often, we are brought to the Wall by circumstances and crises beyond our control. Regardless of how we get there, every follower of Jesus at some point will confront the Wall. Failure to understand and surrender to God’s working in us at the Wall often results in great long-term pain, ongoing immaturity, and confusion. Receiving the gift of God in the Wall, however, transforms our lives forever.



Stage 1: Life–changing awareness of God. This is the beginning of our journey. This could begin at childhood or adulthood. This is when we have a salvation experience. We realize our need for mercy and begin our relationship with him.

Stage 2: Discipleship. In this stage we learn about God and what it means to be a follower of Christ. We become part of a Christian community and begin to get rooted in the disciplines of the Faith.

Stage 3: The active life. This stage is described as the “doing stage”. We get involved, actively working for God, serving him and his people. We start taking our gifts and talents to serve the Lord and others.

Stage 4: The Wall and Journey Inward. Notice that the wall and the Journey inward are closely related. In some cases, the Journey inward eventually leads us to the Wall. Most importantly, it is God who brings us to the wall.

Stage 5: Journey Outward. Having passed through the crisis of faith and the intense inner journey necessary to go through the Wall, we begin once again to move outward to “do” for God. We may do some of the same active

external things we did before (like give leadership, serve, and initiate acts of mercy towards others). The difference this time is that now we give out of a new, grounded center of ourselves in God. We have rediscovered God's profound, deep, accepting love for us. A deep inner stillness now begins to characterize our work for God.

Stage 6: Transformed into love. God continually sends events, circumstances, people, and even books into our lives to keep us moving forward on our journey. He is determined to complete the work he began in us. By this stage the perfect love of God has driven out all fear (1 John 4:18). The entirety of our spiritual lives is finally about surrender and obedience to God's perfect will.

I want you to think and reflect on where you are on your spiritual journey with the Lord. Have you had some walls? How was your experience going through the wall? Were you able to go through the wall or are you still stuck there? Maybe think through one way this wall impacted you and your view of God.

MODULE 8

Lesson 2

Principle 6: Receive the Gift of Limits

We need to learn to discern our limitations.

Look at your personality. Do you get more energy from being with people (extrovert) or from doing tasks (introvert)? Are you more spontaneous and creative, or controlled and orderly? Are you more easygoing and relaxed, or tense and anxious? Are you bold and a risk-taker? Are you sensitive and intuitive with other people? There are different test out here you can take to help you with this.

Look at your season of life. Your season of life is also a God-given limit. Ecclesiastes teaches us “there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens ... a time to plant and a time to uproot ... a time to weep and a time to laugh ... a time to be silent and a time to speak” (Eccl. 3:1–8). Parenting has seasons. There are seasons when we need to be home with small children. Then these children become teenagers and leave home, thrusting us into a different season of life. There are times when, because of health reasons, our families need us. There are seasons of financial prosperity and times of struggle. There are times to be studying intensely and preparing. There are times for great activity. There are times to grieve a loss and wait. It is critical we do not judge other people’s seasons or impose our season on others. Little is permanent in life.

Look at your life situation. Your life situation is also a limit. When we age physically, we find our bodies cannot do what they used to. When we are young and without much life experience, certain doors may remain closed to us. If we have a physical or emotional disability or a sickness, we may find this keeps us from going down a path we may have planned. If you are married, Paul considers that a limit (1 Cor. 7:32–35). Singleness is a different kind of limit. Each child, while a gift from God, now constitutes a limit in what, where, and how you use your life to serve God. If you have a special-needs child or an aging parent, that too affects your life course.

Look at your emotional, physical, and intellectual capacities. Your emotional, physical, and intellectual capacities are also a God-given gift. I have a large capacity for people and complexity in my work. At the same time, if I work all day with people for more than two days consecutively, I find myself lethargic and depressed. I need time to read, pray, and reflect. It is so freeing as a wife and a leader for me to utter the words “I can’t.” When we don’t respect God’s limits in our lives, we will often find ourselves overextended, stressed, and exhausted.

Look at your “difficult” emotions. Anger, depression, and rage, for example, often function as oil lights in our lives, informing us that something is not right on the inside of the engine of our lives. This is often one of the ways God stops me and gets my attention.

Look at your scars and wounds from your family past. They are also God-given limits and gifts. If we will look for the hand of God moving in our family history, even in the most painful moments, we will find golden nuggets in that rocky soil. Abuse, neglect, abandonment, poverty, oppression, and so on may cause us to feel we are “behind,” always trying to catch up. God sees it differently. The limits I inherit from my family turn out to be gifts, once I embrace them. I find myself more dependent on God, more sensitive, and less judgmental of others. I love others better as I encourage them to joyfully live within their God-given limits.

Ask yourself these questions: Does the way in which I am living my life fit my God-given nature? Does it fit my true self? Am I being faithful to my God-given talents, my unique story, my weaknesses?

Maturity in life is when someone is living joyfully within their God-given limits. I find most of us resent limits — in ourselves and in others. We expect far too much from ourselves and each other and often live frustrated and angry lives. Much of burnout is a result of giving what we do not possess. Henri Nouwen summarizes our challenge well:

No two lives are the same. We often compare our lives with those of others, trying to decide whether we are better or worse off, but such comparisons do not help us much. We have to live our life, not someone else's. We have to hold our own cup. We have to dare to say: "This is my life, the life that is given to me, and it is this life that I have to live, as well as I can. My life is unique. Nobody else will ever live it. I have my own history, my own family, my own body, my own character, my own friends, my own way of thinking, speaking, and acting — yes, I have my own life to live. No one else has the same challenge. I am alone, because I am unique. Many people can help me live my life, but after all is said and done, I have to make my own choices about how to live.

God invites us to do life, to work from a place of rest. I watch carefully for signals that I have strayed from my God-given life. I know I am off center, when:

- I am anxious.
- I am rushing or hurrying.
- My body is in a knot.
- I am doing too many things.
- My mind cannot stop racing.
- I am driving too fast.
- I am not able to be fully present with people.
- I am irritable about the simple tasks of life, like having to wait in line at the supermarket.
- I am skimming over time with God. These are a few of my warning signs. You may want to delete some or add others that apply to your particular temptations and vulnerabilities. Most important, we must be brutally honest with ourselves when we are straying from the center of God's will and the unique life he has called us to live.

Take some time to reflect and journal on seeing if you are off centered, why is that?

MODULE 9

Lesson 3

Principle 7: Embrace Grieving and Loss

Three phases of grieving

1. Phase One: Paying Attention as Part of the Grieving Process

2. Phase Two: Waiting in the Confusing In-Between.

3. Phase Three: Allowing the Old to Birth the new

Startling shifts and inner changes result in us as we take this strange path downward into mourning. It becomes apparent why Jesus taught, Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. As a result of grieving we experience new, inner births or changes:

- We have a greater capacity to wait on God and surrender to his will. Grieving breaks something in our fearful self-will that wants to run the universe for God.
- We are kinder and more compassionate.. Sadness softens our defense and people find us safer. Henry Nouwen rightly says that the degree to which we grieve our losses is the degree to which we are compassionate. “There is no compassion without many tears.. To become like the father whose only authority is compassion, I have to shed countless tears and so prepare my heart to receive anyone, whatever their journey has been, and forgive them from the heart. Absorbing our own pain, we are able to enter the pain of others.
- We are less covetous, less idolatrous. Life is stripped of its pretense and non essentials. We are more apt to rid ourselves of the unimportant things in life that others so desperately want.
- We are liberated from having to impress others.. We can follow God’s plan with a new freedom because we are not as motivated to please people
- We are able to live more comfortably with mystery when it comes to God and his plans. We are not afraid to say “I don’t know”, and live in “holy unknowing”
- We are characterized by greater humility and brokenness.
- We enjoy a new vivid appreciation of the sacredness in all of life – the changing seasons, the wind, the falling of the leaves, the holidays, other people..
- We have fewer fears and a greater willingness to take risks
- We sense the reality of heaven in a new way, understanding more fully that we are only aliens and so-journers on earth.
- We have a greater sensitivity for the poor, the widow, the orphan, the marginalized, and the wounded. We understand them.
- WE are more at home with ourselves and with God.

Grieving our losses transform us in remarkable ways that makes the process worthwhile. Layers of our counterfeit self are shed. Something truer – that is, Christ in and through us – slowly emerges. New possibilities become possible – for us and for those we touch with our lives.

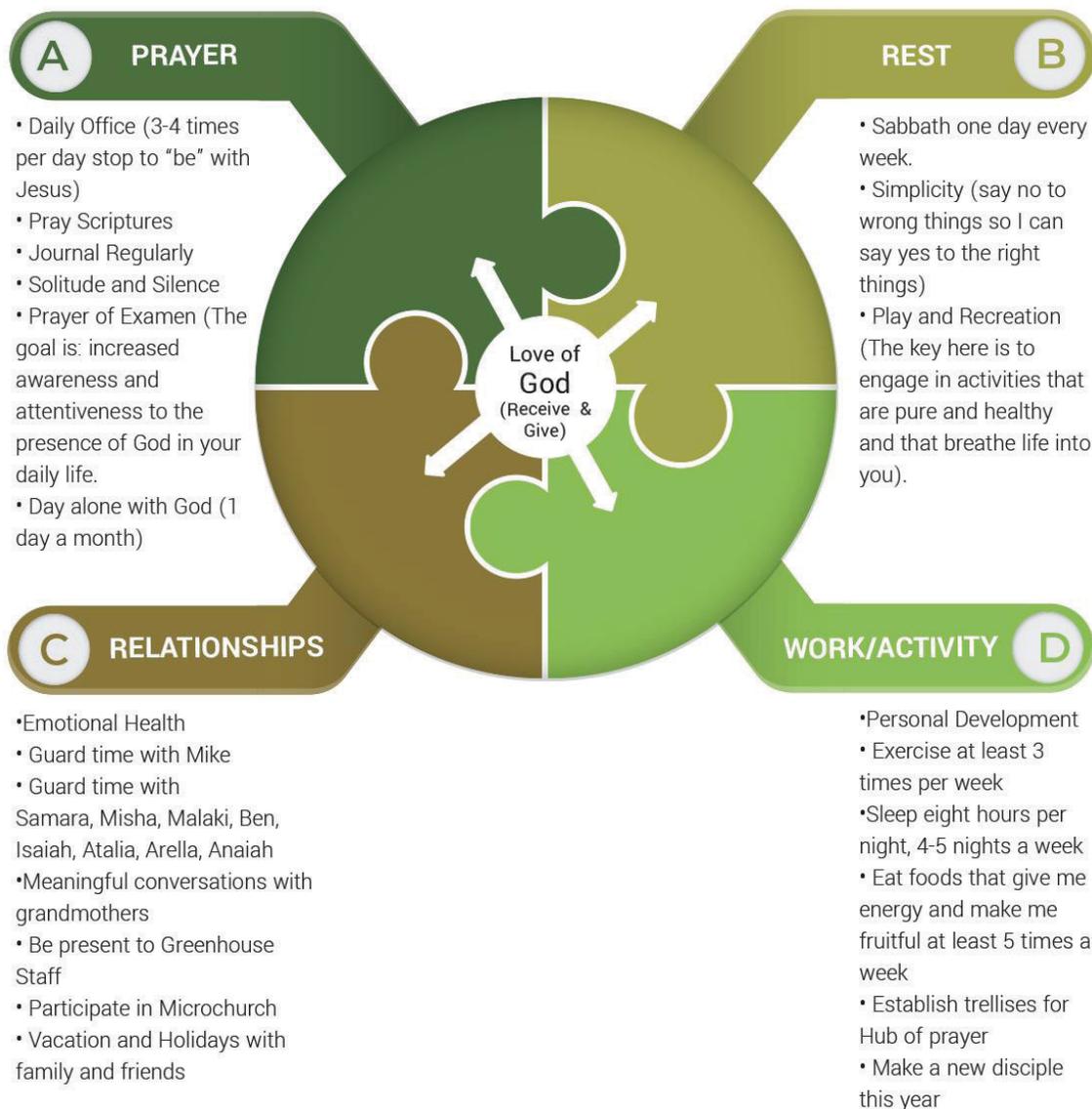
This is what happened to me after the accident. New beginnings. God will lead us into new resurrections.

MODULE 11

Lesson 2

Principle 9: Develop a Rule of Life

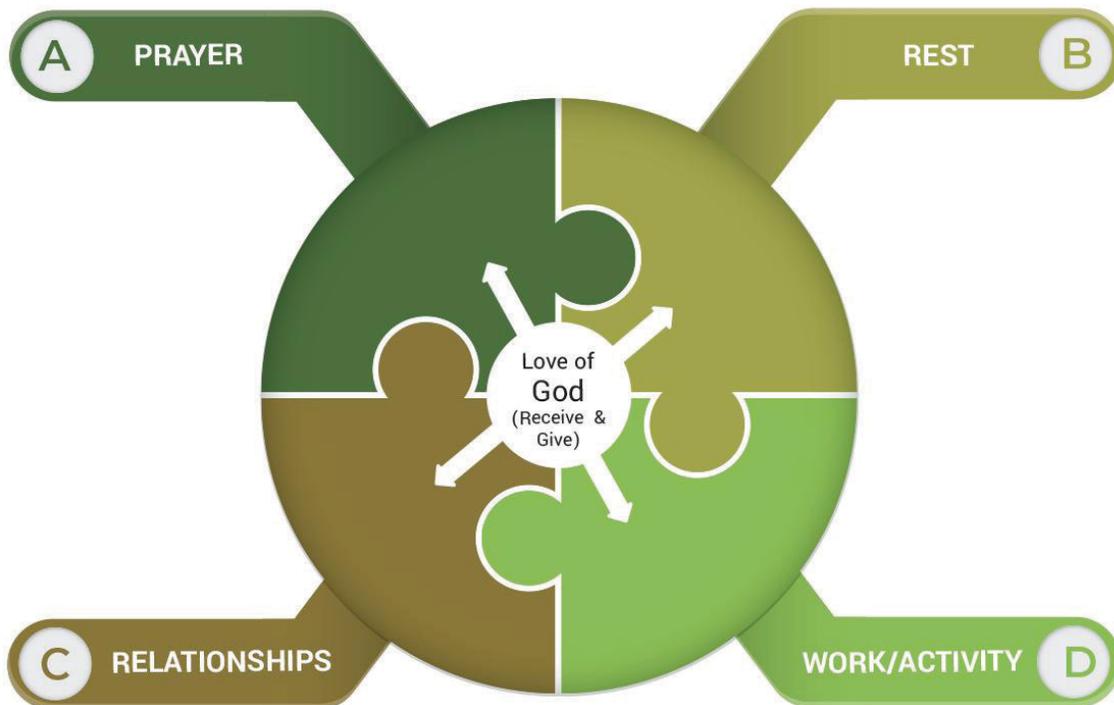
My Personal Rule of Life



The best way to begin crafting a Rule of Life is to first do some prep work. Before filling out a sheet with commitments for prayer, rest, relationships, and work, take some time to work through the following questions:

- What do you currently do that nurtures your spirit and fills you with delight? Consider people and places as well as activities. Write down everything you can think of. Your list may include gardening, walking the dog, being in nature, talking with close friends, cooking, painting, jumping out of airplanes, or any number of other possibilities. List them all. If you don't currently do much that nurtures your spirit, spend some time identifying some things you'd like to try.
- What people, places, and activities do you need to avoid because they deplete you or make it difficult for you to remain anchored in Christ? This includes anything that negatively impacts your spirit – violent movies, hurrying, going beyond your limits, etc. Again, write down everything that comes to mind.
- What "have to's" impact your rhythms in this season of life? For example, this might include caring for aging parents, raising a young child or a child with special needs, dealing with health concerns, or navigating a demanding season at work, etc.

Once you have a good idea of the things that nurture you, deplete you, and are nonnegotiable on your schedule, you have a baseline for considering what you want to include in the four Rule of Life categories – prayer, rest, relationships, and work.



MODULE 12

Lesson 1

Principle 10: Make Incarnation Your Model for Loving

Jesus made it clear that love is to be the mark of the church in the world. In this lesson we are going to see what it means to love others by following Jesus in his incarnation. Like him we too are called to:

1. Enter another's world
2. Hold on to yourself
3. Hang between two worlds

What it means to be a disciple can best be understood around the unfathomable mystery of the incarnation. God took on human flesh. The infinite Creator and Sustainer of the universe limited himself to the confines of history and a human body. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). Or as The Message translates it, "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes."

Today, God still has physical skin and can be seen, touched, heard, and tasted. How? Through his body, the church, in whom he dwells. We are called, in the name of Jesus and by the indwelling Holy Spirit, to be skin for people all around us.

After reading Pete Scazzero's books, I learned what he calls reflective listening. It is simple to understand, but very difficult to do. The purpose is to provide a safe, respectful structure for two people to share honestly, freely, and, hopefully, more clearly. Reflective listening is simple. One person has the floor, speaking a few sentences at a time. You don't go on and on. Then the listener repeats back to him or her exactly what has just been said. The person listening attempts to enter into the world of the person speaking, laying aside questions, agendas, defenses, and simply seeks to understand the other person's experience. As I learned and practiced this technique, on one level it appeared robotic and infantile. Initially, I couldn't do it without defending myself or getting angry. Gradually, I am learning and growing. I can remember times when my kids and I actually successfully incarnate with one another. Never had we felt so loved and valued by one another. As we mature in this, it becomes clear to us that we will experience a taste of the kingdom of God on earth, a taste of his love. How could I have been so blind to what is the indispensable element to loving people: listening?

I didn't know how to listen in such a way as to be able to feel what someone else was feeling. I often heard only part of what was said, framing my reply rather than entering their world. Like many others, I was often too busy contradicting, correcting, judging, or rebutting to really understand what other people meant or were feeling — especially if I was rushed or under stress.

Give yourself this little listening test. Circle all the statements you can affirm.

1. I make a great effort to enter other people's experience of life.
2. I do not presume to know what the other person is trying to communicate.
3. My close friends would say I listen more than I speak.
4. When people are angry with me, I am able to listen to their side without getting upset.
5. People share freely with me because they know I listen well.
6. I listen not only to what people say but also for their nonverbal cues, body language, tone of voice, and the like.
7. I give people my undivided attention when they are talking to me.
8. I am able to reflect back and validate another person's feelings with empathy.

9. I am aware of my primary defensive mechanisms when I am under stress, such as placating, blaming, problem-solving prematurely, or becoming distracted.
10. I am aware of how the family in which I was raised has influenced my present listening style.
11. I ask for clarification when I am not clear on something another person is saying rather than attempt to fill in the blanks.
12. I never assume something, especially negative, unless it is clearly stated by the person speaking.
13. I ask questions when listening rather than mind-read or make assumptions.
14. I don't interrupt or listen for openings to get my point across when another is speaking.
15. I am aware when I am listening to my own personal "hot button" that causes me to get angry, upset, fearful, or nervous.

If you checked 12 or more, you are an outstanding listener; 8-11, very good; 5-7, good; 4 or fewer, poor -"you are in trouble." If you want to be really brave, after you score yourself, ask your spouse or closest friend to rate you as a listener. You may be surprised.

David Augsburger has summed this up well: "Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable."

When you read the Gospels, you see accounts of Jesus interactions with individuals – Matthew, Nathaniel, a prostitute, Nicodemus, a blind man, a Samaritan woman, and many others. When the rich young ruler came up to him, Jesus looked at him and loved him. He listened. He was present, never in a rush or distracted. He took the time to explore stories.

People who enter into other people's world are available and present. One of my favorite thoughts comes from Henri Nouwen: to care means first of all to be present to each other. From experience you know that those who care for you become present to you. When they listen, they listen to you. When they speak, they speak to you. Their presence is a healing presence because they accept you on your terms, and they encourage you to take your own life seriously.

I want you to study and learn these three exercises on how to listen:

Incarnational Listening

How to begin...

Decide who will speak first and who will listen first.

When you are the speaker...

1. Speak using "I" statements (rather than you statements). In other words, talk about your own thoughts, feelings, and desires.
2. Keep your statements brief.
3. Stop to let the other person paraphrase what you've said.
4. Include feelings in your statements.
5. Be honest, clear, direct, and respectful.

As the listener...

1. Give the speaker your full attention (don't be thinking about your rebuttal)
2. Step into the speaker's shoes (feel what they are feeling, then get back out)
3. Avoid judging
4. Reflect back as accurately as you can what you heard them say (paraphrase)
5. When you think they are done ask "Is there More?"
6. When they are done ask them, "Of everything you have shared, what is the most important thing you want me to remember?"

You may want to set up a 7-10 min time limit on the speaker to begin. Or you may keep going until your partner

says, No, there's nothing more.

Validation

A second listening exercise you can learn, and practice is called simply "validation". Validation is not necessarily agreeing with the other person but saying something like:

"I can see how you would see it that way (even if I don't agree)"

"From your perspective that makes sense"

"I can understand that"

"That makes sense."

Again, the key is to say and mean it, truly entering into that person's world. This takes a lot of humility.

Exploring

Exploring put simply I to function as a good news reporter and as questions. "Tell me more. Help me understand. How did you draw that conclusion?" the goal is to set aside any need to respond, defend, or correct the other person. This is especially challenging when you are feeling attacked, annoyed, afraid, or angry. Exploring tests your ability to remain non defensive. Again, you are not to think about what you are going to say next but are attentive to their world and reality.

Most Christians, especially those of us in leadership, talk much more than we listen. As a mom I know I talk much more than I listen to my kids and every day I work hard to change this.

MODULE 15

Lesson 2

Principle 13: Take Your Community Temperature

DAILY OFFICE

1. Appreciations

- We think them in our heads but often only say them when someone has gone above and beyond the call of duty.
- Some families and cultures never express appreciation.
- Appreciations are important to the life of any community or relationship. e.g., “I appreciate you waiting for me last night when I was running late.” e.g., “I appreciate you arriving early and getting the coffee ready before the meeting.”

2. Puzzles

- We use them when we don't want to make negative assumptions about people especially when we don't have all the information.
- Puzzles prevent us from jumping to conclusions and negatively interpreting what is going on around us.
- Puzzles give us an opportunity to slow down and ask questions instead of making judgments.
- Puzzle is a loving word. e.g., Instead of being upset and not saying anything at all or angrily saying, “Why didn't you return my phone call?” you can say, “I'm puzzled as to why you didn't return my phone call.” e.g., Instead of thinking, No one washed the dishes last night. I live with a bunch of slob! you can say, “I'm puzzled as to why you left your dirty dishes in the sink last night.”

3. Complaints with Possible Solutions

- All relationships have complaints or things they don't like. This is normal.
- Two challenges with complaints:

(1) Some of our families grew up with an unwritten rule: If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all.

(2) It is very easy to complain and not take any responsibility for a possible solution.

- The purpose of “Complaints with Possible Solutions” is to help you with small irritations and annoyances that arise each day.
- Use the phrase “I notice . . . and I prefer . . .” e.g., “I notice you often leave the lights on in our apartment when you leave, and I prefer you turn them off.” e.g., “I notice our meetings start late, and I prefer we start at the agreed upon time.”
- The person with the complaint takes responsibility for a possible solution.
- Keep complaints light in the Community Temperature Reading.

4. New Information

- This can take many forms—events, appointments, new decisions, achievements, opportunities, or activities. Relationships can only grow when people know what is happening in each other's lives, both the trivial as well as the important. e.g., “Our professor moved the exam so I can go to the movies this week.” e.g., “I'm exploring a different job within my company!”

5. Hopes and Wishes

- Hopes and wishes offer windows into our unique souls, revealing significant parts of who we are.
- Family life in particular becomes richer as we support and listen to each other's hopes and dreams. e.g., “I hope we can get away for vacation this year.” e.g., “I hope to get a master's degree in nursing someday.”

Reflect and journal about these questions

1. How did your family of origin share appreciation? Complaints? Hopes and wishes?
2. What was it like for you to express yourself in these different Categories?
3. Which was easiest for you? Which was most difficult for you?

Healthy ways of relating clash with most families and cultures. This is one practical way to put off the old self and put on the new self in Christ (Ephesians 4:22–24).

The CTR is a flexible, elastic tool that can be used one-on-one or in a group setting. It can be used with children/families, with friends, at the workplace, in classrooms, or in a small group. How it is used is dependent on two factors:

Time: How much time do you have? Feel free to use only one or two elements if time is limited.

Environment: If there is a lot of tension in the group, you may want to skip “Complaints and Possible Solutions.”

Remember, the CTR is meant to be used as a tool, not a weapon. Practice the Community Temperature Reading two to three times a week throughout the weeks to become more comfortable with it. I want to leave you with this: When we try to love in our own strength, we discover we can't. We naturally fall back to unhealthy ways of relating, especially under stress. We need Jesus' love to flow into us if it is to flow out of us. That is why developing and deepening your relationship with Jesus is core to WHOLENESS.

MODULE 16

Lesson 2

Principle 14: Stop Mind Reading and Clarify Expectations

DAILY OFFICE

Stop Mind Reading

The Purpose: To clarify what another person is thinking instead of making assumptions.

Key Principle: Never assume you know what a person is thinking or feeling.

How can you stop mind reading:

1. Ask permission to read his/her mind.
2. Say, “I think you think. . . Is that correct?”

Dangers of Mind Reading

- We tell ourselves stories about others that aren’t true.
- Making assumptions without checking them out damages friendships, families, and relationships in churches and workplaces.

Individual Activity

Consider the different relationship areas of your life—work, church, family (marriage, children, parents, siblings, extended family), friendships, neighbors, or roommates. Pick one where you might be “mind reading” or making an assumption. Write down the person’s name (or initials) and the assumption you have.

Partner Activity

Turn to one person in the group. Ask him/her to sit in for the person whose name you wrote down, and then practice this skill.

First ask: “May I have permission to read your mind?” or “Can I check out an assumption I have?”

After the person answers yes, say: “I think that you think . . . Is that correct?” or “I am wondering . . . Is that correct?”

Clarify Expectations is about eliminating confusion, pain, and disappointment in relationships.

The purpose: To recognize whether certain expectations are valid or not, and to clarify our expectations with others.

Expectations come from many sources: families, cultures, TV, the INTERNET, fairy tales, billboards, schools, etc.

The Problem with Many of Our Expectations

Unconscious: We have expectations of others that we don’t even know we have. We often don’t know we have expectations until we are disappointed.

Unrealistic: We have expectations that are not reasonable.

Unspoken: We’re conscious of them, and they may be realistic, but they are not spoken.

UN-agreed Upon: We have expectations of others that they did not agree to, or others have expectations of us

that we did not agree to.

Confusion around expectations exists in:

- Workplaces
- Homes and families
- Neighborhoods
- Churches

The Million-Dollar Question

- What expectations do we have a right to have and what expectations do we not have a right to have? In other words, what is a valid expectation and what is an invalid expectation?
- Sometimes we don't even know we have an expectation until we become angry or disappointed.
- What makes an expectation valid?

Valid expectations are:

Conscious: I am aware of my expectations.

Realistic: This means there is evidence to support that the expectation is reasonable. Either it has been done in the past or the person has the capacity and willingness to do it.

Spoken: I have expressed the expectation clearly.

Agreed Upon: The other person has agreed to the expectation by saying "yes."

Key principle: An expectation is only valid when it is mutually agreed upon. The exceptions to this key principle are expectations between a parent and child (e.g., expected chores); employer/employee contracts; and marriage vows of faithfulness.

MODULE 17

Lesson 1

Principle 15: Fight Cleanly

DAILY OFFICE

Most Christians we meet are poor at resolving conflict. There are at least two reasons for this: the first relates to wrong beliefs about peacemaking and the second relates to a lack of training and equipping in this area.

A misinterpreted verse in the New Testament is Jesus' proclamation: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9). Most people think that Jesus calls us in this verse to be pacifiers and appeasers who ensure that nobody gets upset. We are to keep the peace, ignoring difficult issues and problems, making sure things remain stable and serene.

When out of fear, we avoid conflict and appease people, we are false peacemakers.

For example:

Karl is upset about the behavior of his spouse who constantly comes home late after work. He says nothing. Why? He thinks he is being like Christ by not saying anything, although he does give her a cold shoulder. He is a false peacemaker.

Pam disagrees with her coworkers at lunch when they slander her boss. She is afraid to speak up. She goes along. I don't want to kill the atmosphere by speaking up and disagreeing, she thinks. She is a false peacemaker.

Bob goes to dinner with ten other people. He is tight financially, so he orders only a salad and appetizer. Meanwhile, the other nine order appetizers, steak, wine, and desserts. When the bill comes, someone says, "Let's divide up the bill equally. It will take forever to figure it out." Everyone agrees. Bob is dying on the inside but won't say anything. He is a false peacemaker.

Yolanda is engaged. She would like more time to rethink her decision but is afraid that her fiancé and his family will get angry. She goes through with the wedding. She is a false peacemaker.

Ellen loves her parents. They are both quite critical about how she raises her children. Each holiday is filled with tension. Ellen doesn't say anything because she doesn't want to hurt their feelings. She is a false peacemaker.

Sharon thinks her boyfriend is irresponsible but feels bad for him. He has had so much pain already in his life, she thinks. How can I add to that? So, she backs down from telling him the truth about the way his behavior is slowly killing their relationship. The relationship dies a slow death. She is a false peacemaker.

The problem with all these scenarios is that the way of true peace will never come through pretending what is wrong is right! True peacemakers love God, others and themselves enough to disrupt false peace... You can't have the true peace of Christ's kingdom with lies and pretense. They must be exposed to the light and replaced with the truth. This is the mature, loving thing to do.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus explains to us the characteristics we need to display if we are to engage in true peace-

making – poverty of spirit, meekness, purity of heart, mercy, etc. (Matthew 5:3-11). He also follows the call to true peacemaking by stating that persecution will follow for those of us who follow him in this.

Nonetheless, unresolved conflicts are one of the greatest tensions in Christian's lives today. Most of us hate them. We don't know what to do with them... Instead of risking any more broken relationships, we prefer to ignore the difficult issues and settle for a "false peace", hoping against hope they will somehow go away. They don't. And we all learn, sooner or later, that you can't build Christ's kingdom on lies not pretense. Only the truth will do.

Many of us believe loving well is learned automatically, that it is just a feeling". We underestimate the depth of our bad habits and what is needed to sustain long-term Christlike change in our relationships.

After the fall of Jerusalem, Daniel, a young man at the time, was carried off to Babylon as a slave and placed in the king's "university" to be trained for leadership. Part of that training included a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. Let's read Daniel 1:8-17

A core discipleship issue for all followers in the new family of Jesus is to learn how to resolve conflicts maturely.

The purpose: To resolve a conflict maturely by eliminating "dirty fighting" tactics, and by taking responsibility for a difficult issue. Our families of origin have formed us to handle conflicts a certain way. e.g., "Don't get anyone upset." e.g., "Be nice." e.g., "Don't rock the boat."

Jesus' Model of True Peacemaking

He brought disruption in order to bring true peace.

He did not avoid conflict or appease people.

He didn't ignore tensions or differences.

Key principle: True peace will never come by pretending that what is wrong is right.

Individual Activity

Put a checkmark next to the dirty fighting tactics that apply to you.

DIRTY FIGHTING TACTICS

- Silent treatment
- Lecturing
- Blaming/attacking
- Condescension
- Threatening gestures
- Name-calling
- Criticizing
- Sarcasm
- Complaining
- Denying
- Walking away
- Placating
- Avoiding
- Shouting

- o Using “always” and “never”
- o Anger/rage
- o Passive aggressive behavior
- o Lying
- o Hitting/violence
- o Showing contempt

Lesson 2

Principle 15: Fight Cleanly

DAILY OFFICE

Fight Cleanly: The Wrong way

Examples of two office workers and two roommates

Conflict resolution in the church is not very different from conflict resolution outside the church! It is possible to be a Christian for five, fifteen, or even fifty years and still handle conflict as if we were twelve years old in our family of origin.

A Clean Fight is about breaking negative generational patterns through the Spirit of God. A Clean Fight is a negotiation between two people for the sake of the relationship.

Key principle: The person who asks for the Clean Fight is acknowledging he/she is the one with the issue.

Fight Cleanly: The Right Way

Jessica Models a Clean Fight with Her Mom

Steps to a Clean Fight

1. Ask permission. State the problem. “I notice ...”, e.g., “Mom, I notice that ever since I have moved back home from college, you regularly give me advice.”
2. State why it is important to you. “I value...” e.g., “I value having an adult-to-adult relationship with you, rather than an adult-to-child relationship.”
3. Fill in the following sentence: “When you ...I feel...” e.g., “When you give me unsolicited advice, I feel hurt because I think that you don’t think I’m responsible after having lived on my own for four years, graduated college, and now am working full-time.”
4. State your request clearly, respectfully, specifically. e.g., “I’d like to ask that you refrain from giving me advice unless I ask for it.”
5. Listener: Consider the request. In a few sentences, share your feelings and perspective. E.g., “Wow, Jessie, I had no idea how my words were affecting you. But as a mom, I have concerns and I see I can be overprotective at times.”

Listener: Say if you are willing to do all of it, some of it, or none of it. e.g., “I am willing to stop giving you advice. But once again, I am your mother and I might slip. I would like to ask you to gently remind me when I’m crossing your boundaries.”

6. Speaker: Agree to the request or offer an alternative. e.g., “Mom, if you do slip and give me advice, how about if I signal you with the words *comprendé* or *gotcha* to let you know you have crossed a boundary.”

Listener responds. e.g., “That’s great, Jessie.”

7. Together, write your agreement and plan to review it in a few weeks.

Speaker: My understanding of the agreement is: e.g., “Mom will refrain from giving me advice unless I ask for it. If she slips, I’ll signal her with *comprendé* or *gotcha*.”

Listener: My understanding of the agreement is: e.g., “I won’t give Jessie unsolicited advice, but if I slip, she will gently remind me by saying *comprendé* or *gotcha*.”

8. Review the agreement in two to four weeks. e.g., “We will review the agreement on June 8 at 8:00 p.m.”

Individual Activity

Answer each of the four questions. Remember to stick to only one issue.

1. State the problem. “I notice…”

Be concrete when you state the problem. You must describe a behavior, not just the emotion.

For example:

“I notice you get frustrated with me when we’re arguing” describes an emotion.

“I notice you get up and walk away when we’re arguing and you’re frustrated with me,” describes a behavior.

Other good examples:

“I notice you call me after 11:00 p.m.”

“I notice you leave dirty dishes in the sink for more than a day.”

“I notice you leave your empty coffee cups in the car.”

“I notice you rarely fill the car up with gas.”

“I notice you don’t answer my emails for at least a week.”

“I notice that you pick up your cell phone at least three times when we are together in a restaurant.”

“I notice that I have to wait for you for at least ten minutes whenever I come to pick you up.”

Pick a concrete behavior that is not a strong emotional issue for you.

2. State why it is important to you. "I value..."

3. Fill-in the following sentence: "When you _____ I feel _____."

4. State your request clearly, respectfully, and specifically, including details such as times and/or dates.

Partner Activity

1. Find a partner. This is best done with the person with whom you have the issue. So, if it is possible now, partner with that person. Most of you, however, will be practicing with a neutral person. If that is the case, have your partner role-play.

2. Decide who will talk first, and then follow the process described below.

3. After ten minutes, switch roles and repeat the process.

THE Clean Fight Process

Speaker: Ask for permission to do a Clean Fight.

Listener: Remember to repeat back what you hear the speaker saying by paraphrasing after each sentence stem (steps 1-4).

Speaker:

1. State the problem. "I notice..."

2. State why it is important to you. "I value...because..."

3. Fill in the following sentence: "When you . . . I feel. . ."

4. State your request clearly, respectfully, and specifically, including details such as times and/or dates.

Listener:

5. Consider the request. Briefly share your feelings and perspective on it.

6. Are you willing to do all of it, part of it, or none of it?

Speaker:

7. Agree on the (modified) request or offer an alternative. Keep going back and forth until you come to an agreement, but not more than three times.

Together:

8. Write your agreement and make a plan to go over it in two to four weeks.

Speaker: My understanding of the agreement is:

Listener: My understanding of the agreement is:

Think and journal about this question

1. What would be most helpful about the Clean Fight process? What would be most difficult?
2. Jesus says: "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9). What blessings might there be on the other side of learning this very important skill-in your personal life, relationships, work, or church?

Conflict is normal, important, and necessary if relationships are to enter their next level of growth and maturity. Research shows 96 percent of arguments are determined in the first three minutes. Be careful how you start a conversation. (If you start off poorly, feel free to stop and say, "Hey, Would you mind if we start again?") If you find yourself stuck in a "fight" that is complex, speak to a mature mentor, pastor, or professional counselor.