

# Leadership Development

Cru City Embark Discussion Guide



Discovering our Place and Purpose



# 01

## Overview

### **What's our vision?**

We deeply desire to see a generation of leaders having a profound impact for God's Kingdom. And we believe the emerging generation of 20-somethings and 30-somethings have been hand-wired by God for the cultural moment we live in today.

**Leader Development groups are designed to be a supplement to a person's already existing church, neighborhood, and vocational community and involvement to cultivate personal thriving toward the common good of the city.**

### **What exactly do we value?**

*Personal Thriving* | Being self aware is necessary in the world in order to be people who live and lead from a place of freedom. From a place of identity we can then engage culture and lead well. We refer to this pursuit as counter-formation. The cultural arc of influence around us does not bend toward the wholeness and sanctification promised by God in the Scriptures.

*Healthy Community* | We intentionally pursue this counter-formation with others because we are created for intimate connection to God and others.

*The Common Good* | Individuals can be redemptive forces within companies, industries, relational networks, churches, neighborhoods, etc. These institutions can either be forces of injustice, or redemptive forces within a city for flourishing & renewal. Living for the "common good" of all doesn't happen without intentionality. It's a choice. Engaging in the leadership development model is a strategic way to intentionally invest in yourself, your community, and in the Kingdom of God.

## Biblical foundation of our approach to personal development.

Reproducing and multiplying your life is God's Idea of how the Kingdom will grow  
(2 Timothy 2:2)

Deep intimacy and connection (John 15) - He is the Vine, Shepherd, King, Father, Lover  
Learning to love the Lord our God with all...  
(Matthew 22:37)

Having character and leaving a legacy that affects your children's children (Deut. 9, Ps. 103:13-17)

Do not neglect the gifts God has given you  
(1 Timothy 4:14)

Fan into flame the gifts God has given you  
(2 Timothy 1:6-10)

Spur one another on toward love and good deeds  
(Heb. 10:19-25)

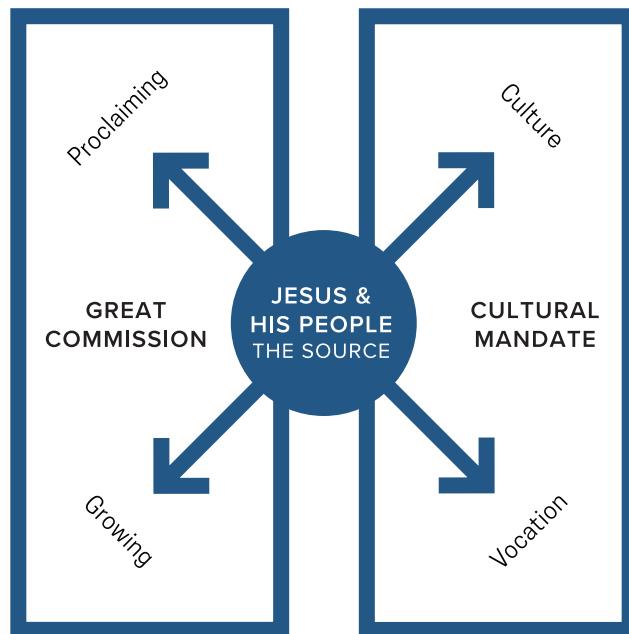
Bring in glimpses and be a foretaste of the Kingdom on Earth (Ps. 8, Jer. 29:4-11) (Love & serve the city, if the city prospers you will prosper)

The Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20, Hab. 2:14, Ps. 67)

Each of us is called to be set apart & are to an active part of the Royal Priesthood (1 Peter 2:9-10)

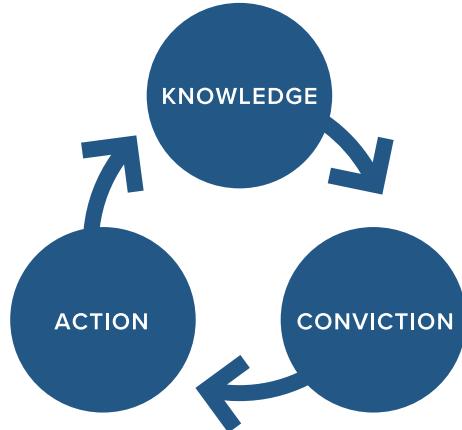
## Leader Development Model

The topics that are covered in the groups are based on the diagram below. Starting at the Source with Jesus & His People, we explore the outward manifestations in the Great Commission and Cultural Mandate.



## How do the groups work?

Our approach is to help you move from head knowledge to heart conviction, resulting in practical application. Growing Core Belief into Action



Development Groups are all about transformation, not just more information. Therefore, there is a specific transformative learning process that we encourage groups to follow. Our groups meet every 4-6 weeks, covering a different topic, focusing on each phase of the development cycle. Meeting outlines follow the learning process of:

### Framing Idea > Prompting Action > Reinforcing Together

The discussion guide will help you engage with the lesson topic and your group in the gap between face-to-face meetings. Between each group meeting, you will find the remote “online” lessons have 4 components:

-  **UNDERSTAND (Framing Idea)**
-  **PRACTICE (Prompting Action)**
-  **PROCESS (Reinforce Together)**
-  **ACT (Reinforce Together)**

## How the learning process practically works:

### Understand

- About 20 minutes for framing the next core transformational concept
- At least 1 hour of processing the concept framed in the previous group meeting and debriefing what surfaced from the action assignments. High value of there being space for process group moments.

### Prompting Action

- Peer mentoring: what happens away from our “official” times together may likely be most important.
- Practical Assignments that prompt life practices for experiencing or expressing the Gospel.
- Rotating Process Partner - meet one time in between our gatherings so you have verbally processed learning together before arriving to the group time.
- High value in our time for flexibility based on what the Spirit surfaces / your needs.

### Reinforcing Toward Core Belief

- The first hour or so during our meetings will be—for the most part—honestly processing the previous meeting’s assignment, and adding new layers to it. (The focus is on personal shared learning, not the facilitator’s expertise.)
- Revisit and reinforce core themes throughout our times. Find how they connect with each other.

# 01

## Quick Feedback Loops

Feedback within the group enables quick adjustments as necessary. We want to improve as we progress, so we don't get stuck in something that isn't helpful

## What will be processed?

The group has a total of eleven sessions together. After an introductory session, there will be ten topics covered. You can see the topics on the diagram, and a general summary of what is covered below.

### 01 Overview

### 02 Identity

### 03 Unity

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### 06 Inner-World

### 07 Influence

### 08 Growth

### 09 Spirit-Filled

### 10 The E-Word

### 11 Rest

# 02

## Identity

It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we're living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.

EPHESIANS 1:11-12 (MSG)

### Overview

Discovering your identity is an important step in being able to be honest with yourself about both the good and the bad. Admitting your weaknesses and embracing your strengths is absolutely necessary in order to be effective as a leader. Thanks for starting on this journey!

### Objective

Discover and discuss how our identity impacts our life and leadership. Over the course of this lesson, you will...

- Learn how God sees you.
- Write down words that you would use to describe yourself.
- Talk about those words with your process partner.
- Engage with how you might change the way you think about yourself.
- Share what you've learned through this with someone outside the group.



## UNDERSTAND | How Does God See Me?

Sinner? Success? Failure? Friend? Imposter?  
Stranger? Leader? Outsider?

How God sees you shapes your personality, your attitude, and your relationships. Few of us were raised in homes where we were consistently taught that God sees us as His child... a son or daughter that was chosen by God to be included in His family. We didn't just "happen;" we were intentionally created, redeemed, and adopted into the household of God by our Heavenly Father.

God created you in His image to be in relationship with him. That is who you are.

He wants to help you and be there for you. He wants to pursue you, affirm you, guide you, and bless you. He wants to help you interpret the events and circumstances of your life so you have peace about them. He wants to continually teach you so you'll teach others. A disciple is a learner and follower of Jesus. And that starts when we accept our identity as part of His family: beloved, adopted, forgiven child of the Living God.

During this journey, you may find yourself drifting back to lies about who you think you are. Often messages that we have absorbed from our families, society, and media can prompt us to embrace a false view of ourselves based on a number of factors including temperament, ethnicity, race and/or gender. In order to combat those lies, take a moment to share with the group about a time when you felt like you were living out your true God-given identity.

"God. We see Him as a benevolent Being who is satisfied when people manage to fit Him into their lives in some small way. We forget that God never had an identity crisis. He knows that He's great and deserves to be the center of our lives."

FRANCIS CHAN, CRAZY LOVE



## PRACTICE | How Do I See Myself?

Find a quiet time and place and sit down with a piece of paper and a pen. Ask yourself this question: "**When I think about myself - who I am as a person - what words would I use to describe my identity?**"

In a column: Try to come up with at least 25 words. This may be difficult to come up with this many words, but this level of reflection will help each of us understand the importance of what we believe about ourselves. keep it to less than 10 words. This is personal, so be completely honest with yourself; no one else has to see your list. Don't filter these words, just write down what comes to you. We all have positive and negative attributes. Try to use words that capture both.

**Now pray and ask God to give you the words that HE would use to describe you—His adopted son/daughter.**

Beside each of the words you wrote down in the first column, jot down the word that came to you when you asked God for his descriptor. Look at the contrast between the words. Think about the difference between how you see yourself and how God sees you, then come to the next session prepared to share what you've discovered.

While reflecting on your two lists, try and answer the following question: **What are times in your life when this is particularly important to remind yourself?** We all spend time living in both false identities and true identities, and this exercise will help you become more aware of this tendency.



## PROCESS

Discuss the “How Do I See Myself?” exercise with a partner. Focus on the words that conflict most with the words God uses to describe you. We are social beings. Often the narratives about who we are based on race, gender, age, etc., impact us. How do social categories influence how I view myself?

**Read Ephesian 1:3-14. Look at the list of descriptions. How do the words that describe you there align or differ with your list?**

Share your ideas and see if you can help each other. Be bold. Speak into each other’s worlds. Help one another walk by faith in who God says you are.



## ACT | Share with a Friend

Taking time to understand your identity is a helpful exercise whether you follow Jesus or not. Ask God to give you an opportunity to share your insights you’ve learned about how God sees you with your friends outside of your “church circle.” Trust Him to provide opportunities for authentic connection:

- What have you learned about yourself and your gut response judgements of yourself?
- How are you understanding how a Christian identity is formed beyond a moment of salvation?
- Bonus Challenge: Consider sharing what you’ve learned about your identity with someone who is not yet a follower of Jesus.

“Define yourself radically as one beloved by God. This is the true self. Every other identity is illusion.”

BRENNAN MANNING

# 03

## Unity

**TRIGGER WARNING:** This is a lesson on unity. In light of the tragic disunity that many of us have experienced across cultural, ethnic, and racial lines, this content may evoke painful memories or experiences. We hope this will lead to healing, yet recognize you may need time and space to process.

### Overview

In a beautiful reflection of his trinitarian nature, Jesus prayed for his people to reflect the remarkable oneness of his relationship with the Father, while honoring their social and cultural differences. The Church has historically struggled to faithfully live out unity in this calling across cultural, ethnic, and racial lines.

Culture is made up of what humans create: the artifacts, ideas, and words we share. Ethnicity is the shared cultural and ancestral history of a people. Race is a socially constructed way of organizing people by arbitrary physical differences like skin color or hair texture, as a means to create a hierarchy which has also created cultural differences.

Of these three, there has been no greater obstacle to unity than race. We'll reference race throughout most of this lesson, but invite you to apply this to cultural and ethnicity unity as well. From Genesis to Revelation, God has been on a rescue mission to restore unity across all that divides. It's a mission desperately needed in our society, deeply scarred from a legacy of slavery, segregation, and "the narrative of racial difference." How can the unity that Jesus prayed about be expressed among us? To answer that, we must first understand how the narrative of racial difference has shaped us.

I have given them the glory  
that you gave me, that they  
may be one as we are one—  
I in them and you in me—so  
that they may be brought  
to complete unity. Then the  
world will know that you sent  
me and have loved them  
even as you have loved me.

JOHN 17:22-23

Some of us have grown up in communities where the dominant, racial category of whiteness was the uncontested “normal.” Racial dominance is a privileged category that, in America, centers “whiteness” as normative. It also creates “the other.” Some of us have grown up as the subdominant racial category of other. Whether that was called, black, Asian, Latinx or other, such marginalization can lead to a sense of rejection, isolation, and even fear. And along the way, historical prejudices, misunderstandings, and injustices have piled up. The kind of trust that sustains unity in the midst of diversity has worn thin or worn away.

But, as the Spirit applies the gospel to our hearts and communities, ever more deeply, we find more of the humility and boldness required to bring our truest selves to the table, while joyfully welcoming others to do the same. And each relationship we build with someone different from us stitches back together the incredible picture of the Trinity that emerges from oneness, while celebrating distinctiveness.

At the beginning of LDG, you spent some time processing your identity. In that conversation, we focused on seeing ourselves the way God sees us. As rich as that conversation about identity can be, it’s also incomplete. None of us

develops an identity in isolation. To put it another way: each of us has a culture which has formed our identity in profound ways.

If you grew up as a minority, you’ve probably been aware of this fact for as long as you can remember. If you’ve spent most of your time as part of the majority culture, you may not have given much thought about culture, ethnicity, or race. But no matter what your background is, growing in your understanding of your own culture and its impact on you is crucial to becoming the kind of leader who can build relationships of trust in a world that can seem irreparably fractured along cultural, ethnic, and racial lines.

## Objective

Become a more culturally self-aware leader who can build relationships of trust across cultural differences. In this lesson, you will:

- Examine your cultural/ethnic/racial background by considering the people who have most influenced you.
- Respond in the Spirit to the emotions that surface as you consider your cultural influences.
- Trace generations of cultural influence through the relationships that have shaped you.
- Consider the implications of your cultural influences on your leadership.
- Trust God to build trust with others in your group as you share stories and insights with one another.



## UNDERSTAND

From the earliest days of the church, our limitlessly creative God has called us from remarkably diverse cultures to be his people. The miracle of Pentecost specifically addressed the challenge of bringing together people “from every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5) who didn’t even speak the same language. And as the church grew and began to welcome Gentiles, as well as Jews, the range of cultural and ethnic differences grew even further. One of the most striking snapshots of this diversity comes in the church at Antioch, where “the disciples were first called Christians”(Acts 11:26b). Just look at the backgrounds represented by the leaders of this church named in Acts 13:1:

- Barnabas - a wealthy Jewish Levite born on the island of Cyprus
- Simeon - a black African convert to Judaism
- Lucius - a Gentile from North Africa
- Manaen - a Jewish aristocrat strongly influenced by Greek culture
- Saul - a Jewish born Pharisee raised in Jerusalem

All of these men worked together, worshiped together, navigated conflict, and enjoyed an uncommon love for one another in Christ. The same is true across the New Testament, where we find merchants and slaves, men and women, Jews, Greeks, Romans, and Africans, all bound together as God’s people.

Yet, these extraordinary relationships were not forged without confronting the ethnic and racial discrimination of their day. Perhaps most notably, as the gospel began to spread among people who didn’t share Jesus’ Jewish heritage, the church wrestled with the question of what it meant to be a Christian who was not also Jewish. Their judgment, recorded in Acts 15, required both Jews and Gentiles to let go of some of their deeply ingrained cultural practices and viewpoints for the sake of the gospel and for love of their brothers and sisters in Christ. However, it did not require Jewish Christians or Gentiles to renounce their cultural identities.

2,000 years later, the challenges of building common bonds across cultural differences are no less formidable. In the American context, centuries of oppression have made this more of a challenge. If we want to be a part of change, we need to embrace a lifelong journey of learning, repentance and growth. Though cities are, by definition, places of density and diversity where difference is unavoidable, the histories, hurts, and uncertainties associated with those differences can make it daunting to engage with people from other backgrounds in meaningful ways.

So where do we begin? No matter how familiar you are with the reality of cultural, ethnic, and racial differences, one of the most foundational first steps towards engaging this conversation is understanding your own culture. And even though each of us has a culture, it’s almost impossible to describe it if you look at yourself in isolation. Culture is a collective phenomenon, so the best way to get a look at your own is to look at the people who have shaped you.

## PRACTICE

(This activity is adapted from Daniel Hill's book *White Awake*)

List the following:

- Members of your family of origin
- Closest friends
- Mentors you look to for guidance
- Preachers/teachers/theologians you look to for spiritual guidance
- Authors of the books you read

Once you've finished your lists, take note of the cultural background each one represents.

Then take some time to reflect on the following questions:

1. What patterns do you notice? Why do you think those patterns are there?
2. What do you feel as you review your lists?  
Is there anything that makes you sad?  
Grateful? Unsettled? Angry?
3. In what ways have the people on these lists shaped you? How do you think their cultural backgrounds have impacted the ways they have shaped you?

Write out a prayer responding to God based on the insights and emotions that surfaced during this exercise.

## PROCESS

Meet with your process partner to debrief the cultural influences exercise.

It can be easy to drift into abstract conversation about broader cultural markers and differences. While it's important to acknowledge larger patterns, this conversation will be most impactful if you can connect those patterns to your own personal experiences. How did it feel to examine your lists? What memories came to mind as you reflected on them?

Help each other fight the shame and self-righteousness that can flare up when culture is discussed by taking appropriate risks in vulnerability and listening with genuine curiosity.

## ACT

Reach out to one of the people on your lists and share about your experience with this exercise. You might ask if they've ever thought about the cultural backgrounds of the people who have shaped them. Look for connections between the people who influenced them and your own formation.

What are you seeing about the ways cultural influences are passed down through "generations" of family, friendship, mentorship, and/or leadership?

# 04

## Your Design

### OVERVIEW

Each of us has a unique personality and is an original, a one-of-a-kind creation of God. There never has been and never will be anyone else just like you. God made us all different, and has hand-crafted us to experience Him, others, and our callings uniquely.

As we live our lives, however, most of us start to learn behaviors that are inconsistent with our innate personalities. These personality differences can become sources of conflict in a family, in a workplace, and in a community, thereby making it difficult to stand and lean into our transformed identity in Christ.

### OBJECTIVE

Understand your innate God-given qualities and learn to recognize the parts of your personality that limit you from living out of His design for your life. Over the course of this lesson, you will...

- Take a personality test and begin processing the ways God has uniquely made you.
- Learn how to distinguish your true self from the ways you've tried to shape your personality.
- Begin to write down specific weaknesses and strengths.
- Share your findings with a friend.

“God intended for us to carry our strengths, our weaknesses, our personality, our character into every circumstance.”

PRISCILLA SHIRER

 **UNDERSTAND**

To understand ourselves and know the purpose of our personality, we must first comprehend the centrality of relationship in the triune God, and sisters and brothers in Christ..

As people, we were created in the image of God, which means we've been made by a relational God (the Trinity) and for relationship with others. Just as the Father, Son, and Spirit give and receive in perfect love to one another, we offer ourselves to each other, and others offer themselves in return.

A major filter we use to understand and express ourselves, and the world around us, is our personality. However, throughout life, our innate personality has developed in conjunction with the brokenness around us. As little kids, we placed masks over parts of our authentic selves to protect us from harm and make our way in the world. Made up of innate qualities, coping strategies, conditioned reflexes, and defense mechanisms, our personality helped us know and do what we sensed was needed to please our parents, fit in with friends, satisfy expectations of our culture, and get our needs met.

Over time, our adaptive strategies become increasingly complex. They get triggered so often that we can't tell where they end and our true nature begins. In fact, the term "personality," is derived from the Greek word for mask, "persona" - reflecting our tendency to confuse the masks we wear with our true selves. As such, in order to get to our true selves, we need to peel away the masks we wear to protect ourselves, revealing the people who were made in God's image.

As you begin to process more of how God's made you through this lesson, remember: God's redemptive work in your life will involve "putting off the old self" and "putting on the new self created after the likeness of God." (Ephesians 4:22-24). Through faith, our whole self dies and rises with Christ, including unique qualities and characteristics that make us, us. As we rise, our personalities can and will be redeemed and renewed, to reflect God's glory.

*"Now, with God's help, I shall become myself."*

SØREN KIERKEGAARD

## PRACTICE

Take a personality test. Choose from The Enneagram, Myers Briggs, DISC, StrengthsFinders, or any other offering you know of. Make sure to confirm with your facilitator, if you're choosing a test not listed.

As you take the test and read the results, be mindful of a few things:

- Every personality is made in the image of God, and thus shows us something of who God is.
- This test is merely a tool! There is no formula to discover God's design for your life, but there are helpful indicators and prompts to lean into.
- This tool is meant to help you sit with Jesus and process with God ways to grow in light of the results..
- This is not a tool to justify sin, it's a tool to trace back where we began to miss the mark with certain sinful tendencies. Repentance is extremely important in this practice.

After you take the test, begin to journal what surfaces. Here are a few prompts to help you, along the way:

- What do you resonate with? What do you not resonate with?
- What do you identify with and do with ease?
- In light of your results, what are sinful tendencies you may be more prone to fall into?
- What are some key events in your life that have shaped how you view yourself? Try to think back as early as possible.



## PROCESS

Discuss your journal entry with a friend. Invite them to share how they have specifically seen your strengths play out, and what they notice about God's character by observing you.

Share what surfaced as you read through and journaled about your weaknesses/your life-shaping experiences. Spend some time praying for one another and encouraging each other out of who God says you are.



## ACT

Choose 3 people you walk closely with in your life. Perhaps consider both longer-term friends, and newer ones. Without sharing your personality test findings, ask them the following 2 questions:

- How do you experience me?
- What attributes of God do you see in my life?

Next, share your findings with them. Continue to dialogue through which portions of your personality findings they have observed, and how their experience of God's formation in your life has been evident.

# 05

## Vocation

### OVERVIEW

There is beauty and brokenness in every vocational industry. Redemptive edges are the parts of our work which have the potential of brokenness turning into beauty through gospel transformation. What would the redemptive edge of your industry look like if Jesus were lord of it? Perhaps more practically and personally, what would it look like if Jesus was the CEO at your job? How would it impact culture, the city, and the world?

### OBJECTIVE

Understand God's design for work and focus on discovering your own vocational calling, as it relates to God's heart for restoration and redemption. Over the course of this lesson, we hope you will....

- Learn how vocational calling fits into the broader biblical narrative.
- Apply your learnings from the Identity modules to codify your burdens, gifts, and passions.
- Process with a partner about what you are discovering about your calling.
- Reflect to that same growth partner what you see as his/her passions and calling.
- Share the burdens, gifts and passions exercise with someone new.

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”  
EPHESIANS 2:10 (ESV)



## UNDERSTAND | Why Our Work Matters:

As people bearing the image of God, we are called to fill the earth with His glory through creating what we commonly call “culture.” Another term for this is God’s “cultural mandate,” - the command to exercise dominion over the earth, subdue it, and develop its potential (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:15). In her book Total Truth, Nancy Pearcey says it well:

**“Our calling is not just to ‘go to heaven’ but also to cultivate the earth, not just to ‘save souls’ but also to serve God through our work. For God himself is engaged not only in the work of salvation but also in the work of preserving and developing His creation. When we obey the Cultural Mandate, we participate in the work of God himself.”**

Simply put, the idea of the cultural mandate is that God entrusts us with something, and He calls us to do something with it, something worthwhile, something that fills the earth with more justice, more health, making it more glorious, more like Him.

During your twenties there is an opportunity and a freedom to explore what God might be entrusting you with. Often it takes time for men and women to hit their stride in their vocational calling. Be patient with yourself and enjoy the process. As you experience a growing awareness of how God is forming you, God will also be giving you unique burdens for the needs of the world.

“How can anyone remain interested in a religion which seems to have no concern with nine-tenths of his life?”

DOROTHY SAYERS

The first step of discovering vocational calling is seeing how your story fits into the greater story of redemption. When we understand the story of God, we have a context by which we can understand the role of vocation as it relates to revealing Jesus to the world. His redemption goes far beyond personal salvation. God uses vocational callings to bring redemption to whole industries. The Wall Street banker no longer seeks glory and power for herself, but rather fuels an economy that impacts for good. The fashion designer creates clothes worn to enhance the dignity and God-given beauty of people. NYC pastor, Jon Tyson, says, “It’s about showing the world what the world is like when Jesus is Lord of it.” Work is meant, by God’s design to bless us, others, and the environment God created us to dwell in.

## PRACTICE | Burdens, Passions, Gifts

Take some time to explore your own gifts and passions, as they relate to your vocation, calling, and the needs of the world. Refer back to the ‘Your Design’ module, where you did a personality assessment. With a bit more of your story as the context, ask God to give you a greater vision for how He’s made you.

**Reminder:** You don’t have to know or solve everything here. This is just a starting point.

**Burdens:** The first step of identifying calling is seeing how our story fits into the greater story of redemption. God often gives us a recurring and growing interest and awareness of a need He is leading us to. What do you find compelling as you consider the needs of this world? Ask yourself the following questions:

- What grieves you?
- What evokes anger?
- How do you want to participate in Jesus’ transformation of dead things?

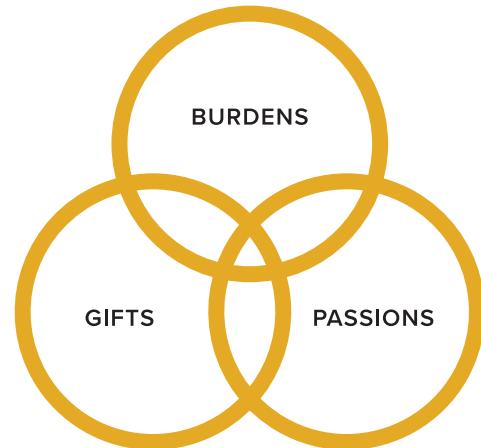
**Passions:** Learning what breathes life into us can help dictate how we leverage our energy in the workplace. What gives you a sense of delight and rest when completed? Ask yourself the following questions:

- When have you ever felt the emotion, “This is why I am here!”?
- What would you do for free?
- What do you naturally find yourself always doing/drawn towards/ reading about?

**Gifts:** There’s no question we can all improve in different areas and acquire skills, but it takes a tremendous amount of effort to do something well that you’re not naturally suited for. Think about the different dynamics of your life. What do you tend to do effortlessly? Ask yourself the following questions:

- What is something you naturally do with ease?
- In what area do others ask you for help?
- What did you love doing as a child?

**Take some time to consider your burdens, passions, and gifts. Make some connections and record your responses to these questions.**



 **PROCESS**

Share with your process partner insight you have gotten as it relates to your vocational calling and the burdens God is putting on your heart. Or perhaps you find yourself confused and concerned about your vocation. Share your process.

- What was confirming?
- What was surprising?
- What was freeing?
- What scared you?

If you've taken a personality assessment ('Your Design' Module) spend some time discussing any insights and reactions you had to taking it and seeing your results.

Take time to reflect to one another the gifts and passions you see in him/her. Speak words of life into one another.

Pray together that God would raise up your generation to say "yes" to the vocational call of Jesus on their lives.

Use these questions to help get your conversation started:

- What grabs your attention no matter what you are doing (think like a dog chasing a tennis ball)?
- What is something you believe that almost nobody agrees with you on?
- What are you willing to try now?
- Looking back on your career, 20 or 30 years from now, what do you want to say you've accomplished?

*"The Great King has summoned each of us into His throne room. Take this portion of my kingdom, He says, I am making you my steward over your office, your workbench, your kitchen stove. Put your heart into mastering this part of my world. Get it in order; unearth its treasures; do all you can with it. Then everyone will see what a glorious King I am. That's why we get up every morning and go to work. We don't labor simply to survive; insects do that. Our work is an honor, a privileged commission from our great King. God has given each of us a portion of His kingdom to explore and to develop to its fullness."* RICHARD PRATT

 **ACT | Share with a Friend**

Think about your circles of friends and co-workers.

Who do you observe is thriving in pursuing their calling? Have a conversation with them and walk through the burdens/gifts/passions diagram to see where there are natural overlaps in their life. How might you encourage them to "excel still more" in honing the gifts and passions God has entrusted to them? How have they encouraged you to think through your own diagram more creatively?

# 06

## Inner-World

### OVERVIEW

We often feel the pressure to have it together. This can lead to external performance and the temptation to hide our ingrained patterns of sin. Do you struggle with shame and self-contempt due to habitual sin cycles in your life? This month, we will discover how to uncover the root causes of our sin and move toward experiencing freedom in the context of community.

“If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Rivers of living water will brim and spill out of the depths of anyone who believes in me this way, just as the Scripture says.”

JOHN 7:37 (MSG)

### OBJECTIVE

Learn how to explore root issues of destructive and sinful behaviors and attitudes using the Needs Cycle as a tool. Over the course of this lesson, you will...

- Explore the need and pain beneath our destructive behaviors.
- Personally process the Needs Cycle.
- Talk about your process with a growth partner.
- Think about how you might find freedom as you process with God your cycles of sin.



## UNDERSTAND | What is going on inside of me?

**Where do you turn to for baseline security, emotional connectedness, and core identity?**

There are things that we intellectually know are true about God and our relationship with Him, but we know all too well that a different reality gets lived out more than not in our everyday lives.

We all have internal drivers that take over and make us forget the gospel. We all have broken cisterns we seek for sources of satisfaction, instead of drinking deeply from the Living Water as our Source (Jeremiah 2:12-13). We have default patterns and false beliefs around which we unknowingly construct our world.

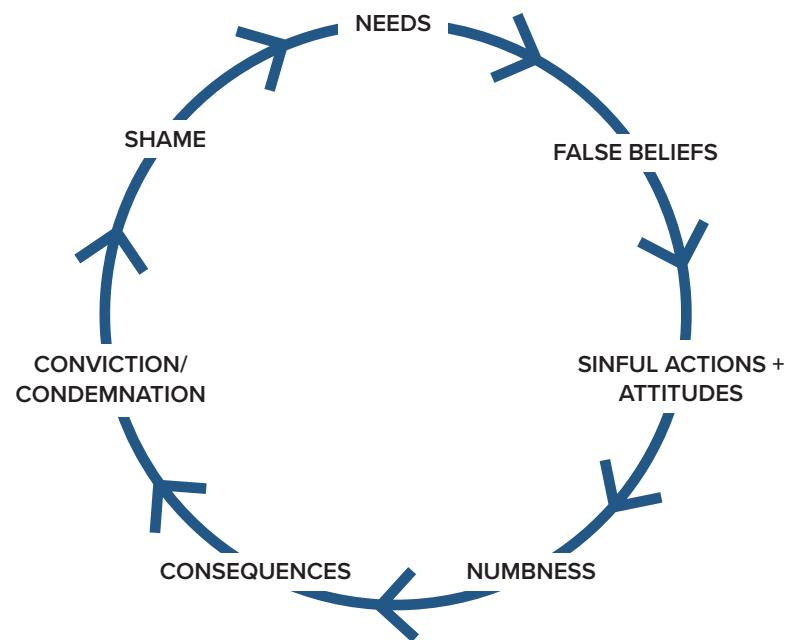
If we desire to be leaders (both now and in the future) who have the security and self-awareness to lead with faith-filled courage, we must identify and know well the internal battles that will surface because of our stories. It's not enough to polish the surface of our lives and allow our leadership development to be about adding skills that are merely external bells and whistles. We must take a look "underneath the hood" of our lives to diagnose the engine of our interior world and what the core issues are that really drive us.



## PRACTICE | The Needs Cycle

What do I turn to in an attempt to meet core needs in my life?

Examine the **Needs Cycle**:



Ask the Lord to bring to light several recurring or recent behaviors or attitudes and make a list of what comes to mind.

Make note of themes. Choose one or two behaviors and/or attitudes, and walk through the "Needs Cycle" making notes of what God surfaces that may be underneath that behavior or attitude.

**What is a core need or pain, and a coinciding false belief, that is behind a recurring or recent sinful behavior or attitude?**

“Shame needs three things to grow exponentially in our lives:  
secrecy, silence, and judgement.” BRENE BROWN

## PROCESS

Meet with and share with your process partner at least one specific thing that surfaced for you with the “Needs Cycle” assignment.

Ask questions into each other’s interior world. Discuss possible ways to address not just the behaviors and attitudes, but the needs, pain, and false beliefs behind them.

Pray for God’s healing in the places that would really matter and affect your character and interior world.

## ACT

Embracing and sharing our brokenness allows for deep connection with God and others . This next month, commit to praying through and journaling the needs cycle each time you recognize a habitual sin surfacing.

- How does secrecy add to shame? How have you experienced that personally?
- How can you invite Jesus into your needs cycle?
- Bonus challenge: Explain the needs cycle to a friend.

“All of Jesus’ teaching on prayer in the Gospels can be summarized with one word: ask. His greatest concern is that our failure or reluctance to ask keeps us distant from God.” PAUL E. MILLER

# 07

## Influence

### OVERVIEW

Jesus commands his followers to “make disciples of all nations”, yet most of us struggle with where to even start. We’ll discover that reproducing the Kingdom begins with simply learning to create an intentional plan and trusting the Spirit to do His good work.

### OBJECTIVE

Explore the biblical mandate Jesus has for investing in the lives of others and its practical implications. Identify what it means to be a disciple of Jesus who makes disciples who makes disciples. Over the course of this lesson you will...

- Learn how the Kingdom expands through Jesus’ command of discipleship.
- Develop your own personal “why-how-what” manifesto about disciple-making.
- Process your Mini-Manifesto with your growth partner.
- Think about who God has placed in your life that He may be asking you to intentionally share life with and develop.

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”

2 TIMOTHY 2:2 (NIV)



## UNDERSTAND

Discipleship is spiritual on-the-job training. Whether it's Jesus' last words before his ascension, or Paul's final letter he penned, Scripture is clear that God's primary way of building his Kingdom would be through an army of Spirit empowered people in the process of being transformed and investing in others through intimate life-on-life grace and truth relationships.

Beliefs and behaviors are not formed out of thin air. We are all being formed by something and someone. If we, as followers of Jesus, do not engage in intentional formation and discipleship toward the Kingdom, the culture will certainly form us. In the media industry alone, billions of dollars are spent every year to shape us into believing we need some product or service, and it works.

The formation we naturally fall under in this world manipulates our sense of self and worth. The messages of the world distort our search for meaning, identity, purpose, and belonging. There is little possibility for us to grow more and more like Jesus through our natural inclinations and default patterns in life. To continually grow as spiritual leaders, it requires engaging in intentional Kingdom formation. This formation takes place in discipleship and disciple-making.

Discipleship is about becoming more and more like Jesus, the One who loves you. Every believer in Jesus is a disciple and no one ever ceases being a disciple, the difference is stepping into full obedience to His voice.

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”

MATTHEW 28:18-20 (NIV)

## PRACTICE | Why? How? What?

Often, when people get intentional about being discipled and making disciples, the conversation is about **WHAT** to do. In our time, we have, in many instances, reduced the discipleship process to a passive act of being taught intellectually about Jesus and spiritual disciplines. The problem is that what we call discipleship today is nothing like how Jesus discipled and modeled discipleship.

To cultivate the **WHY** behind every follower of Jesus engaging in ongoing rhythms of making disciples who make disciples, read the Spiritual Addition vs. Spiritual Multiplication article. Search for the article name at [cru.org](http://cru.org).

To cultivate the **HOW** of disciple-making, watch Why Information is Not Enough for Discipleship by Jo Saxton. Journal about some of the honest reasons you may or may not engage in being and/or making disciples as Jesus commanded. (Video can be found at [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com))

Cultivate the **WHAT**: Discipleship is spiritual formation. We see in the New Testament, Paul with his “son in the faith” Timothy mentoring him and challenging him to maximize the potential that Paul and the other church leaders confirmed in him “with the laying on of hands.” While discipleship occurs in many different relationships, in the New Testament era and today, we see it most common in the church. The church’s mission involves discipleship. If the opportunity exists to disciple someone at your local church, it is important to learn and be guided by their best practices so the person you’re discipling experiences a synergistic experience.

As you consider all these simple, yet important perspectives to spark your thinking, make a list of how you would apprentice other people in your life, as God moves you to live out the Great Commission.

**Make a Mini Manifesto on **WHY** you would do it, **HOW** you would do it, & **WHAT** you would do.**

Think through this as if someone comes up to you in a month and asks you to disciple them (despite the reality that you will likely have to initiate). Use Scripture and Jesus’ model to help develop your thinking:

What motivates you? Where might you be motivated merely by obligation?

In short, what has God in His grace given you that He’s inviting you to give away?

 **PROCESS**

The most effective disciple-makers are those who are continual humble learners. Learn from each other's thoughts as you consider joining God in building the Kingdom by making disciples who make disciples.

- 1. Encourage and challenge each other's thoughts in your why-how-what "manifestos."**

Often we battle with false beliefs that we have nothing to offer. As you discuss, listen for those lies and expose them for one another.

- 2. Is there anyone with whom God is prompting you to initiate?**

Discipleship can happen in either an informal or a formal way. Who is in your life that Jesus is asking you to intentionally disciple in a way that flows with your natural patterns of friendships? Who is in your life that you might want to invite to commit to meeting with you consistently to seek God together in a discipleship relationship?

(Jesus was very intentional in His interaction with Peter, James and John; and in how he chose His 12 disciples.) Discuss how you would go about having those conversations.

- 3. What honestly keeps you from being a disciple who makes disciples?**

Awkwardness in initiating? Fear of failure? Not knowing what to do? Perfectionism? How would Jesus speak to your barriers?

- 4. How would the world be different if people in your generation were passionate about being disciples who make disciples?**

Share and pray for people with whom God may want you to initiate.


**ACT**

Who has God Placed Around You?

Do you know someone who God may be prompting you to initiate an intentional relationship with that could lead to discipleship?  
How could you explore a discipleship relationship with this person?

If no one comes to mind, ask God to put someone in your path.

**Pray for God to provide someone with whom I can have a discipleship relationship.**

# 08

## Growth

### OVERVIEW

Real growth happens in our lives as we embrace the inexhaustibly abundant grace of Jesus and the hard-to-admit truth that we all have destructive sin in our lives. Both truths exist at the same time. Jesus was “full of grace and truth”: 100% grace, 100% truth. And the best thing for us is to strive – in the power of the Holy Spirit – to do the same in our own lives, and in the lives of those in our community.

### OBJECTIVE

Begin to grasp the importance of “high-grace/high-truth” communities and a leader’s role in empowering it to take place. Over the course of this lesson, you will...

- Make observations about your comfort level with grace and truth.
- Read about the 4 developmental tasks and choose one for deeper reflection.
- Talk with your process partner about your personal discoveries from the assignment.
- Initiate a grace and truth conversation with someone you trust in your community.

“And the Word became flesh  
and dwelt among us, and we  
have seen his glory, glory as of  
the only Son from the  
Father, full of grace and truth.”

JOHN 1:14 (NIV)



## UNDERSTAND

Jesus came full of grace and truth (John 1:14-17).

In his book, Changes that Heal, Henry Cloud describes the environment most conducive for growth as a community that experiences grace and truth over time.

Henry Cloud writes:

*"Grace is the unmerited favor of God toward His people. Grace is unconditional love and acceptance. Grace is something we have not earned and do not deserve." Grace is about acceptance in a relationship where one person can say to another: "I will accept you! You can be honest with me about your weaknesses and sin, because we are both objects of grace. Righteousness comes from Jesus alone. I have no right to judge you...You are safe."*

Cloud also says,

*"Truth is what is real. It describes how things really are."*

In other words, truth allows for people who are in community with each other to lovingly engage with another.

### Grace & Truth Community

In a healthy community, phrases like this nurture growth:

- “I’m observing this specific sinful pattern in you. I’m bringing this up because I love you.”
- “This choice doesn’t make sense in light of who you are as a child of God.”
- “God has made you for more.”
- “I know this specific sin pattern feels more like freedom, but freedom in Christ means being set free to live life as God designed it.

### How do you feel about these statements?

People are transformed by the truth—by what is real, combined with grace. Remember the woman caught in adultery? (John 8:2-11) After all was said and done, what did Jesus do? He said, “Then neither do I condemn you.” (grace) “Go now and leave your life of sin.” (truth) The combination of grace and truth allows for people in communities to say to one another: “I am fully for you. Because of that, can I be honest with you about something I am observing about you?”

In a healthy community, you will see this played out by:

- Conflict not being avoided, but resolved.
- Sin not excused or weaponized, but graciously brought to the surface.
- Trust, safety, love, compassion.

What would a high-grace, high-truth environment look like in your life? Do you think that your primary communities are full of high grace and high truth? Why or why not? Do you think people know how to have grace and truth conversations? Do you think communities among your generation are higher in grace or higher in truth? Why?

 **PRACTICE**

All leaders are in a growth process that requires intentionality. In addition, internal barriers inevitably surface in ways that are destructive to others and ourselves; we must address these barriers in order to be effective leaders. The following two assignments will provide opportunities for the experience of high grace and high truth.

Read: The Growth Model (to find this, search “Cru Four Developmental Tasks”). In his book, Changes that Heal, Henry Cloud develops four concepts that he refers to as “developmental tasks.” These four tasks are processed, either intentionally or unintentionally, by people in their twenties on the road to healthy adulthood. Attention to these tasks in the context of communities that are high grace and high truth will help young leaders set a trajectory of emotional health and ability to have an impact for the rest of their lives.

There are several questions listed with each task. They are there, in part, to help you gain a deeper understanding of the implications of development regarding that specific growth area.

Reflect, journal, and be prepared to share with your process partner answers to at least 3 questions from the category that resonates deeply with you.

*Process with Yourself:*

The person we have the most conversations with in a given day is ourselves. We all tend toward grace or truth in how we think of ourselves. Look back to what you learned about yourself in the “Your Design” module. As you think about your personality, your strengths, and how God has made you, have a conversation with yourself that is both full of grace and full of truth.

- Do you tend toward too much truth or too much grace with yourself?
- As you think about your personality, strengths, and weaknesses, what is the internal dialogue you have with yourself? How do you feel about yourself?
- How might your strengths, when overused, turn into weaknesses?



## PROCESS

Meeting with your process partner this month is a fantastic opportunity to engage in high-grace and high-truth conversation.

**First, share what surfaced as a main developmental task at this stage in your life.**

Share honestly about what is necessary about this area and what keeps you from pursuing growth in it. Invite feedback and receive grace as you discuss.

**Next, discuss who in your community God might be calling you to initiate a high grace/high truth conversation with.** What may hold you back from initiating with them? How do you think they might respond?

**ACT**

Read the following article about creating healthy boundaries. Search “Church Leader, Setting Healthy Boundaries” to find the article on building church leaders website.

<https://www.bclstore.com/blogs/leadership-tips/setting-healthy-boundaries>

Think of a situation where you are having a hard time drawing boundaries.

Review and reflect on the Four Developmental Tasks. Identify which come easiest to you and which are more challenging. Choose one developmental task to focus on for growth. What might be a helpful way to grow in that task?

**Pray**

Before you meet up with your group again, be sure to spend some time in prayer. Ask God to help you become a leader who, like Jesus, is full of grace and truth. Pray that grace and truth would define your leadership and that it would resonate and impact those around you.

“Grace is the unmerited favor of God toward His people. Grace is unconditional love and acceptance. Grace is something we have not earned and do not deserve.” HENRY CLOUD

# 09

## Spirit-filled

### OVERVIEW

Living in the city is exhausting. The deadlines, subway delays, and disappointments can all empty us of the energy and vitality we once had, and leave us resentful and bitter toward those around us. How does life with God impact our experience and ability to not just survive the city but thrive in it? What's the difference between a Spirit-filled life and one that is fueled by our own resources, strength, or ability?

### OBJECTIVE

To explore and discuss the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a surrendered and seamless leader. Over the course of this lesson, you will...

- Learn about the person of the Holy Spirit and how to keep in step with Him.
- Practice the discipline of Spiritual Breathing.
- Reflect on your own pursuit of excellence vs. performance orientation.
- Discuss the exercises with a process partner.

“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.”

ROMANS 8:11 (NIV)



## UNDERSTAND

Often in our desire to grow, we put pressure on ourselves to perfect and “get it right” instead of enjoying the intimacy and power of the Holy Spirit. When we surrender to the Spirit of God, we do so to cultivate intimacy with a God who loves us passionately and accepts us completely.

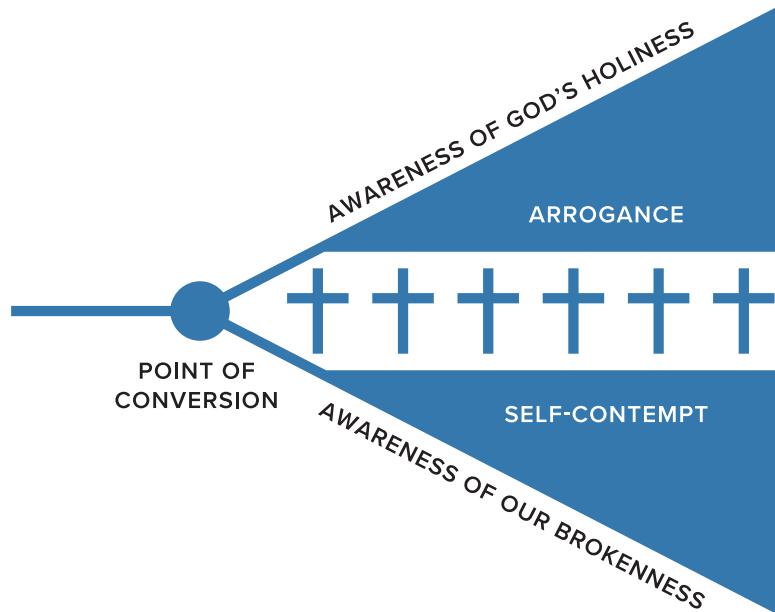
How would living from a place of security change you? How does this relate to the difference between perfectionism and excellence in a place like New York?

This struggle is not only a modern-day reality. Paul spoke about this to the church in Galatia:

“You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?” GALATIANS 3:1-3 (NIV)

What we began by faith in salvation, we continue by faith in keeping in step with Spirit inside of us. As Eugene Peterson says, “If you weren’t smart enough or strong enough to begin it, how do you suppose you could perfect it?” We pay attention to the work of the Spirit in our lives and we respond to Him, not in performance, but in repentance and faith. The believer is not working to secure these realities, but seeking to live in light of them.

Performance vs. Repentance (for print this image needs to be shown in its final form)



### *The Sanctification Model*

Growing in awareness of God's holiness also makes us more keenly aware of our brokenness. The experience of the growing gap can leave us desperate, and with two choices to make. We can:

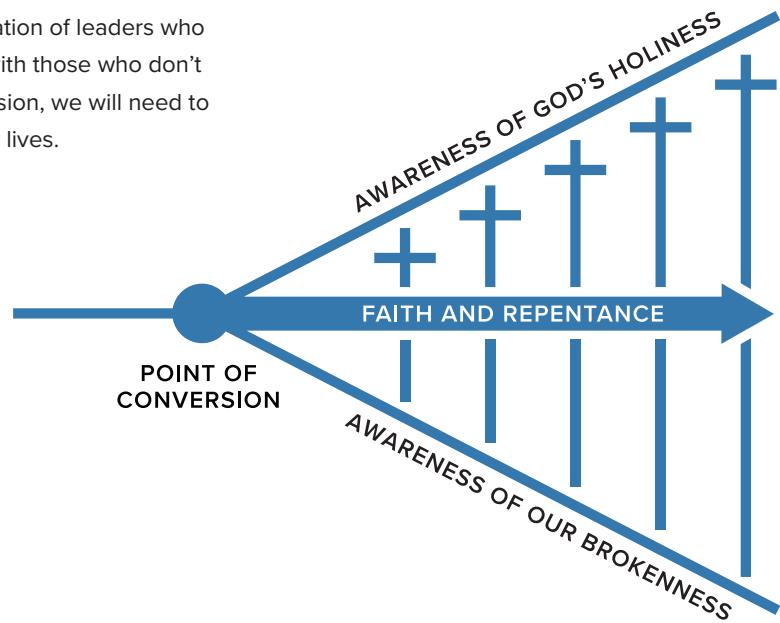
#### **1. Try harder.**

This performance leads either to arrogance ("Look at how I have my life together") or it leads to self-contempt ("I should have known better/I should have it together by now/I failed again!"). This choice often can lead us to avoidance, numbing, and thoughts of giving up.

#### **2. Repent and surrender to the Spirit.**

When we humbly accept our brokenness, we are free to repent and believe that Jesus has already given you His righteousness through His Spirit who lives inside of you. We surrender to His power in a healthy admission that He can do it, we cannot. When we repent, we turn back to restore intimacy and count as true the secure relationship we already have. We cry out and ask for the Spirit to empower us to stay in His presence and keep in step with him.

Living the Spirit-filled life allows us to pursue excellence without the pressure of perfectionism. If we desire to be a generation of leaders who are self-differentiated, able to engage authentically with those who don't know Christ, and a people who loves others with passion, we will need to surrender to the supernatural work of the Spirit in our lives.



## PRACTICE

The essence of the Christian life is what God does in and through us, not what we do for God. Christ's life is reproduced in the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit is to be directed and empowered by Him.

*Who is this Holy Spirit?*

**Write down your responses to the following questions.**

1. What are your beliefs, presumptions, and experiences of the Holy Spirit?
2. Take a look at the following Scriptures that mention the Holy Spirit. What do you see are the different roles of the Holy Spirit?
  - Ezekiel 36:24-28
  - John 7:37-39
  - John 14:15-31
  - Romans 8:1-16
  - Galatians 5:13-25
3. What is confirmed and what are gaps between your presumptions, experiences and knowledge of the Holy Spirit?
4. What keeps you from abandoning yourself to a lifestyle of depending on the Spirit?
5. What would your life look like, if you learned to depend on the Spirit more? How would intimacy with God improve? How would the need to perform decrease?

*Spiritual Breathing*

Spiritual Breathing is a practice that helps us experience ongoing relational intimacy with Jesus. It's a word picture to help us understand moment-by-moment dependence upon the Spirit. This practice can help you engage in a lifestyle of depending upon the Spirit. Take a moment each day to journal briefly about your experience -- the challenges and the benefits.

**Exhale:** Sit with God and ask Him to search your heart. To confess means "to agree with God." People often refer to confession only in the context of sin, but often we must also acknowledge that we need His Spirit to fill and direct us. We need to confess our need for Him. Take a moment to confess your need to God, your emptiness, brokenness, and sin, the moment you become aware of it. Agree with God concerning all of it and thank Him for His presence and forgiveness, according to I John 1:9 and Hebrews 10:1-25. Confession requires repentance—a change in attitude and action.

**Inhale:** Just like taking in a breath, receive God's free gift of forgiveness through Jesus. Surrender control of your life to Christ, and rely upon the Holy Spirit to fill you with His presence and power by faith, according to His command (Ephesians 5:18) and promise (I John 5:14-15). Just as we originally were permanently indwelled with the Spirit by faith, we are continually filled day to day with the Holy Spirit by faith alone. By faith, we experience God's power through the Spirit.

“I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.”

EPHESIANS 4:16-17 (NIV)

## PROCESS

Process with a partner what you learned, are reminded of, discovered, and questioned, as you studied the Scriptures on the Holy Spirit (and its practical implications).

Debrief the Spiritual Breathing exercise.

- What was hard? Did it make a difference in your day? Etc.
- How were you aware of your tendency to rely on yourself? How does self-reliance lead to exhaustion?
- Where did you see God turn your weakness into strength? How did you experience freedom?

Discuss with one another how to cultivate an intimate, day-to-day, moment-by-moment, walk with the Spirit.



## ACT

The principle of spiritual breathing is inspired by Ephesians 5:18, where we are instructed to “be filled with the Spirit.” To remind yourself to practice this process, set a reminder on your phone for 5:18 (you can pick AM or PM) and label it “spiritually breath.” At the end of the week, reflect and journal on how it went.

“The world is not moved by love or actions that are of human creation. And the church is not empowered to live differently from any other gathering of people without the Holy Spirit. But when believers live in the power of the Spirit, the evidence in their lives is supernatural. The church cannot help but be different, and the world cannot help but notice.”

FRANCIS CHAN

# 10

## The E-Word

“So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.”

1 THESSALONIANS 2:8

### OVERVIEW

If we’re honest, we know that the “e-word” often stirs feelings of guilt (when we don’t do it) and fear (that if we do, we’ll lose relationships or influence). Instead of dreading the mention of the word “evangelism,” let’s try to evaluate our preconceived notions of what we may be talking about when we say “sharing our faith.” If we want to grow as Christian leaders, we need to know ourselves well enough to be self-differentiated individuals, who actively engage with how the gospel can both critique and commend the many messages we hear in a given day. Ideally, our natural response to being loved should be to talk about our first love, Jesus.

### OBJECTIVE

Over the course of this module, you will...

- Reflect on the compassion of Christ and the grace of the gospel.
- Map out your current relational networks.
- Reject the false cultural narrative which stops us from engaging the spiritual interest in those God has connected us to.
- Ask and believe God to open up authentic conversations about Him with people in your relational networks.
- Explore how you can team up with another believer to create opportunities for deeper conversations through Connect Spaces.



## UNDERSTAND | What Compassion Looks Like:

In Matthew 9, Jesus is among a weary and wounded humanity. Throughout the chapter, Jesus interacts with numerous people, healing and teaching, and we see that he was “moved with compassion.” The deep sense of concern Jesus expressed was because he saw they were in need of direction and desperately in need of physical and spiritual healing. Imagine if you discovered the cure for a deadly disease. Amazing, right? But what would happen if this miracle medicine was thought to be poison? That sums up the challenge of sharing the gospel in our generation. Because of a lot of personal, historical, and cultural baggage, the message (that Jesus is the universal cure to our sin-sickness) can sound more like poison than cure. But there is good news! Just like in Jesus’ time, people are desperate and looking for direction. And, research has shown us, when we lead with compassion, people are very open to hear about the things we love most.

From a 2019 study done by Barna Research Group, 47% of young people surveyed indicated that they believed it was immoral for them to share their Christian faith with someone from another faith. In looking at the motivations behind why more spiritual conversations don’t happen, another study quoted in the New York Times, by author Jonathan Merritt explained, “Some said these types of conversations create tension or arguments (28%); others feel put-off by how religion has been politicized (17%); others still report not wanting to appear religious (7%), sound weird (6%) or seem extremist (5%).”

However, when surveyed by Cru, 85% of respondents from a diverse set of spiritual backgrounds said they would be willing to talk to someone about Jesus if they upheld five basic truths to the conversation. These facts reveal a tragically ironic impediment to the world knowing who Jesus is:

- nearly half of Christian young adults think it is wrong and offensive to share their faith and yet ...
- 85% of people would be willing to have a spiritual conversation.

We need to push past the false cultural narrative that people don't want to hear, and instead, learn how to position ourselves with a compassionate and clear communication approach. So what were those five ways of communicating that made 85% of respondents willing to talk about Jesus?

1. **Be present and listen:** follow the conversation in a natural and engaging way. This means: follow their agenda and not yours.
2. **Find common ground:** build a relational bridge and not just a spiritual chasm.
3. **Walk in their shoes:** Prioritize understanding their story and not sharing your own conclusions. People want how they see the world to be understood, not simply rebutted.
4. **Talk like a real person:** use words meant for a real person, not just for the pews. Avoid churchy cliches.
5. **Create a better story:** It's about sharing your faith in a way that helps them re-imagine the brokenness they are experiencing in their own life and in the world around them. Offer them more than just an evangelistic conversation. Show them the redemptive implications of knowing Jesus. He restores brokenness.

“I have decided to love. If you are seeking the highest good, I think you can find it through love. And the beautiful thing is that we are moving against wrong when we do it, because John was right, God is love. He who hates does not know God, but he who has love has the key that unlocks the door to the meaning of ultimate reality.”

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

## PRACTICE

**Relational Networks Exercise:** God has placed each of us in places of influence even though we may not be aware of it. The goal of this exercise is to begin to see how God is positioning you to both publically share the gospel and to create a culture that reflects God's image.

- Think through 3 to 4 natural networks in your life (work, neighborhood, apartment, hobbies and interests, etc).
- On a piece of paper, place your name in the middle and draw lines to these 3-4 networks.
- Around each relational network, write down names of people you interact with in that particular network who seem disconnected from Jesus and His people.
- Circle the names of people with whom you have mutual friends who are followers of Jesus.
- Put a "X" beside 3-5 people with whom God has given you unique favor (someone who trusts you and enjoys you for who you are).
- Ask Jesus to give you His heart of compassion for your friends. Please take time to pray that your friends will have a profound encounter with Jesus.



**Interview a friend about spiritual matters:** While bringing up religion can feel taboo, if we never break through these natural sound barriers, we may always feel stuck and not engage in deeper spiritual conversations. A **Spiritual Matters Interview** template has been provided as a training to help those who feel intimidated by the idea of talking to unbelievers about spiritual matters. Use the questions provide, or come up with your own.

Use this as an introduction for the Spiritual Matters Interview:

**"The church is better at talking than listening. I'm doing this activity to learn to listen to people who may not embrace my beliefs. I have five questions about faith and religion and I only want to listen to your answers and thoughtfully respond if you would like me to. This is not for the purpose of getting into a debate with you. I may ask a clarification follow-up question, but not in order to argue. And this is also not 'market research' of any kind. The purpose is to really listen to people and hear what people today think about faith, church, and religion. Would you mind talking with me?"**

*The 5 Questions:*

1. What do you think is the biggest problem facing us today, and what can be done about it?
2. Do you think it is possible to know if there is a God? Why or why not?
3. How do you determine whether an action is right or wrong?
4. What do you find most compelling (or what do you like most) about Christianity?
5. What are your biggest objections (or what do you find most implausible) about Christianity?



## PROCESS

Debrief and share with your “Process Partner” the Relational Networks Exercise and Spiritual Matters Interview.

- How is Jesus growing your heart of compassion?
- What authentic questions can you ask your friends that might spur on spiritual conversations?
- What did you notice from people’s interest and/or responses in the Spiritual Matters Interview? Was it difficult to get the conversation started?
- What fears and barriers surfaced for you?



## ACT

Research shows that, on average, an unbeliever needs to know 5.2 authentic believers before they consider the claims of Christ. What would it look like if you gathered your friends who know Christ and those who don’t know Christ in a way that would allow for authentic relationships to develop? Ray Oldenburg, in his book *The Great Good Place*, explains 5 characteristics of gatherings where people from diverse spiritual backgrounds connect with one another.

1. Neutral ground (People experience safety)
2. Leveler (People experience equality)
3. Conversation is main activity (People experience connection)
4. The Regulars (People experience familiarity)
5. A home away from home (People experience security)

Brainstorm some potential events you could help host in your neighborhood, work community, or social networks where you could create this type of environment. Ideally, you would be able to ask some of the questions from the Spiritual Matters Interview in an organic way.

- What are some practical ideas you have for an event to bring Christians and non-Christians together (flowing out of who you uniquely are, where you already are)? You can host something completely new and unique, or simply be intentional with something already in the rhythm of your life (i.e. Saturday brunches, etc.)
- What are the barriers that might keep you from hosting an event? Who can you ask to do this with you?

# 11

## Rest

### OVERVIEW

Rest, on its surface, seems like such a simple concept. Yet, for the vast majority of us, our lives are overflowing with work deadlines, social obligations, and wasted energy spent trying to live up to the expectations that the world has placed on us. God wants us to architect our lives in a way that depends on Him for strength and sustenance, and not ourselves.

### OBJECTIVE

Discover and explore God's heart for Sabbath rest as it relates to growth as a leader and ability to lead for the long haul. Over the course of this lesson, you will...

- Explore why God created man and instituted the rhythm of Sabbath rest.
- Make a practical Sabbath plan for your life in the city.
- Live out your plan at least twice before our next meetings.
- Debrief your experience with your process partner and share ideas about possible "rest scenarios" in the city.
- Share the exercise with a friend.

"In repentance and rest is your salvation,  
in quietness and trust is your strength."

ISAIAH 30:15 (NIV)



## UNDERSTAND | Rhythms of Rest

God made humans to uniquely reflect His image in having the capacity to create and cultivate. And from the beginning, as He gave us this creation mandate, He patterned in His own work the rhythm of rest. If we are to continually give Him glory in our image-bearing through creating and cultivating, then we need to set aside time to be restored and re-centered. As we experience recovery from this rest, we encourage rejuvenation in others, and therefore, are ourselves “re-created.”

What is implicit in the Sabbath command is our need for restoration. God ceased from creating, not because he needed rest or restoration, but because we do (Genesis 1:31). Where God has boundless energy, we do not. God therefore models rest so that we mandate that rest for ourselves and for any that we lead. In this way, the mandate for rest reflects God’s goodness and justice. Creating taps us out. As invigorating as it can be at times, it can also be depleting, blistering, or boring. Our resources are limited because we are finite. As such, Sabbath is not for more creating. It is for re-creating...Us.

“Stop creating” is the sum of it. This is clear enough. But this thought leaves us more than a little susceptible to our finicky rule-making. Is doing laundry creating? Is writing a blog post ok? What about elbowing your way through the Trader Joe’s weekend crowd? A simple principle can help us discern: Cease from what is necessary. Embrace what brings life.

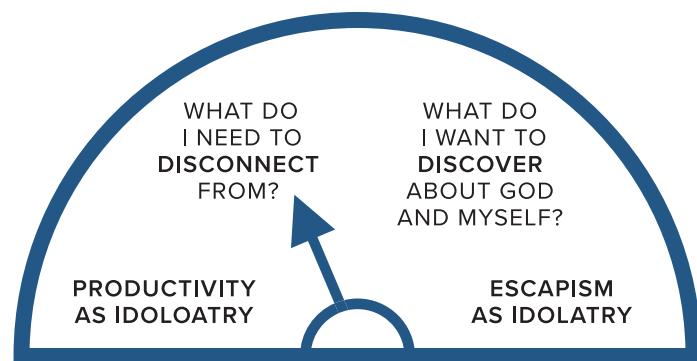
“Sabbath tunes you into God’s voice instead of the voices of the cultural narrative that  
 (a) I am what I do, (b) I am what I have,  
 or (c) I am what others say about me.”

HENRI NOUWEN

Sabbath—It’s one day, yet when we skip it, we are left without life-giving rest for 2 weeks.

- Disconnect: Leave the familiar. It’s a time to cease from what is necessary. A time for disengagement from productivity. A space for reflection and closure.
- Discover: A God who refreshes It’s the time for embracing what brings life. A time where we engage, dream, and wonder what is to come.

The diagram shows how we can tend toward living outside of God’s design for rest by idolizing productivity or escapism. Idolatry is anything we worship in the place of God. We can worship our productivity by overworking and over scheduling life. We can worship escapism by ignoring responsibilities and zoning out in front of a screen. God’s design for work and rest rejects idolatry and lives in the tension of disconnecting and discovering.



How do you tend to idolize productivity or escapism?

Why is this so important? Because leadership is stewardship—the cultivation of the resources God has entrusted to you for His glory. Sabbath gives us both theological and practical help in managing one of our primary resources —our time.

Rhythms of rest allow us to reflect on the old, while waiting in expectancy for the new. Sabbath rest not only allows us to approach a new week with freshness. As we meet our needs of soul and body, we also encourage others to care for themselves as well through our example. We can create a community which values rest, showing off God's design for how creation was meant to reflect Him. Equally as important, we can meet the needs of our soul and body and because our choices impact others, we can encourage others to care for themselves as well through our example.. Rhythms of rest are God's idea.

## PRACTICE

### *Make a Plan*

With pace of life, work demands, relationships, pressures to be out and about, and so much more, it's possibly harder than ever in our culture to find time to rest. It's important to remember, Sabbaths don't just happen, they are created!

1. **Evaluate and Take Inventory.**

Think about your current rhythms of rest. Journal about what you do well and what you do not. What do you really want to experience in your sabbath rhythms?

2. **Brainstorm what brings life and what doesn't?**

What must I disconnect from? (distracting things or things that veer us into productivity.)

What must I discover? (What brings you abundance, recovery, renewal.) As we start the week from a position of rest, we are filled to give out.

### *Create a Note*

3. **Write out a Sabbath plan for a day this month (or even a portion of a day) and live it out.**

Here's a helpful grid to think through:

- Be Prepared beforehand (intentional) - So that you can actually rest (laundry done, meals planned, etc).
- Be Present. (relational) - Fast from media that stifles relating. Focus on sharing moments.
- Be Playful (recreational) - Doing things that are fun, make us laugh, and endear us to life.
- Be Prayerful (devotional) - Be intentional to remember God's presence and take time to commune with Him.

There is no perfect way to participate in Sabbath. Be free. Enjoy your creator. Vehemently deny performance. Performance actually prohibits rest.

4. **How can you encourage others to rest?** Perhaps you are a team leader or supervisor who can share the wisdom and invite those around you to engage in this practice?

5. **Sometime before our next meeting, take time to reflect and journal about how it went.**

What did you enjoy? What fell flat and felt forced? What do you want to continue? The more you delight in God's design of rest, the easier it becomes to live out the practice.



## PROCESS

Grab some intentional time with a process partner.

### **Share specifically about your Sabbath Plan.**

What you hope the day will be (even if it's simple?) What do you plan to intentionally disengage from? What do you hope to engage with that brings life and recovery to your mind, body, and soul?

**(If you have already lived out your Sabbath Plan, share about how it went.)**

**Discuss the realities and core false beliefs that keep you from living out consistent rhythms of rest.** Go to those places with one another. What can help you continue to be intentional with Sabbath rest in this extended season?



## ACT

Start a Conversation about rest with a co-worker or friend:

If there's one thing followers of Jesus in cities have in common with unbelievers, it's likely the lack of rest. We can all relate to the crowded isolation, pace of life, urban stress, and work demands of living in the city. With whom in your life can you bring this common topic? How can you share about God's design for rest and living?

*Create a long-term plan for sabbath*

In this journey of rest, we must all remember that practice makes progress. But if we want to be serious in our counter-formation as disciples of Christ, it will take longer than a month of learning and practice to integrate Christian rest in our lives in sustainable ways. Make a 3-6

month Sabbath plan and ask someone to hold you accountable to it. Here are some questions to consider as you make your 3-6 month plan:

- What do I want to learn? What books do I want to read? What podcasts do I want to listen to? What classes do I want to enroll in?
- Who do I want to connect with? What friendships do I want to re-engage with? How would I want to consider making new life-giving relationships? Who will help me in creating rhythms of rest?
- What activities would engage a divine sense of adventure and creativity? Would planning out refreshing travel give you life? How does exercise and healthy self-care incorporate into your Sabbath plan? What new experiences would help you engage with a different aspect of God? Consider reviewing the Unity module for some ideas.

Judith Shulevitz (writer and culture critic for NY Times, Jewish woman) describes the dynamic of work and Sabbath rest this way:

“My mood would darken until, by Saturday afternoon, I'd be unresponsive and morose. My normal routine, which involved brunch with friends and swapping tales of misadventure in the relentless quest for romance and professional success, made me feel impossibly restless. I started spending Saturdays by myself. After a while I got lonely and did something that, as a teenager profoundly put off by her religious education, I could never have imagined wanting to do. I began dropping in on a nearby synagogue.

It was only much later that I developed a theory about my condition. I was suffering from the lack [of a Sabbath]. There is ample evidence that our relationship to work is out of whack. Ours is a society that pegs status to overachievement; we can't help admiring workaholics. Let me argue, instead, on behalf of an institution that has kept workaholism in reasonable check for thousands of years.

Most people mistakenly believe that all you have to do to stop working is not work. The inventors of the Sabbath understood that it was a much more complicated undertaking. You cannot downshift casually and easily. This is why the Puritan and Jewish Sabbaths were so exactingly intentional. The rules did not exist to torture the faithful. They were meant to communicate the insight that interrupting the ceaseless round of striving requires a surprisingly strenuous act of will, one that has to be bolstered by habit as well as by social sanction.”