

HOMEGROUP GUIDE

For the week of March 26th, 2017



Real Life Ministries Treasure Valley

HOME GROUP GUIDELINES

FOR US TO HAVE HEALTHY AND SAFE CONVERSATIONS

THIS IS A SAFE GROUP

- We will all do our part to create an environment where everyone can be real, open and honest with their struggles and victories

CONFIDENTIALITY IS KEY

- What is said in the group stays in the group

NO CROSSTALK

- Crosstalk is a conversation that leaves others out
- No side conversations
- Listen while others are speaking (if you want to explore more of what someone said, call or talk to them afterwards. This also builds relationship outside of the group time)

NO FIXING OR RESCUING

- We are not here to fix each other, Jesus does that part
- Give encouragement, speak truth, point to Jesus
- Life is a journey, allow people to struggle - grow

CREATE OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE TO SHARE

- Be sensitive about the amount of time you share
- Allow time for others to be a part of the discussion, don't be a first responder

USE "I" VS. "WE" OR "THEM" STATEMENTS

- This is a time for us as individuals to grow
- Work on honesty, transparency, authenticity
- Be committed to resolve conflict Biblically

As humans we will need to extend grace to one another. Conflict is not bad, but an opportunity for growth. We are all being changed to be more like Jesus so conflict and change are part of the journey.

Here are some key scriptures to refer to:

- If someone sins against you. (Matthew 18:15-20)
- Restoring someone in sin. (Galatians 6:1-5)
- Forgive a sinner. (Colossians 3:12-13)
- Reconciling differences. (Matthew 5:23-24)

House Rules (slightly different in each home)

- Honor group start and end times.
- Kid safety guidelines and clean up.

OUR VISION AND MISSION

SHARE THESE EVERY WEEK AT THE START OF YOUR GROUP

VISION: *Reaching the world for Jesus, one person at a time.*

MISSION: *Creating Biblical disciples in relational environments.*

OUR DEFINITIONS

CLARIFY THE MEANING OF “DISCIPLE” AND “RELATIONAL ENVIRONMENT”

DISCIPLE

- A disciple is one who is *learning, being, doing, and making* in relationship with Jesus.
- The foundation for this understanding of discipleship is found in Matthew 4:17-19 ...
- ... *“From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’ As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fisherman. ‘Come follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men.’”*
- This passage leads to four questions that form the foundation of discipleship (learning, being, doing, making).
 - **Learning**: Am I *learning* what it means to be a part of the Kingdom and live out the good news that the Kingdom is near?
 - **Being**: Am I *being* a disciple who lives out of an abiding relationship with Jesus that is built on an identity given from God. Am I *being* (abiding) in God’s love through Jesus so that the Image of God may be restored in me?
 - **Doing**: Am I *doing* the things that God has called me to do? Am I pursuing Jesus, living in obedience to His Word, and giving of my time, talent, and treasure to forward the Kingdom?
 - **Making**: Am I *making* disciples who make disciples?

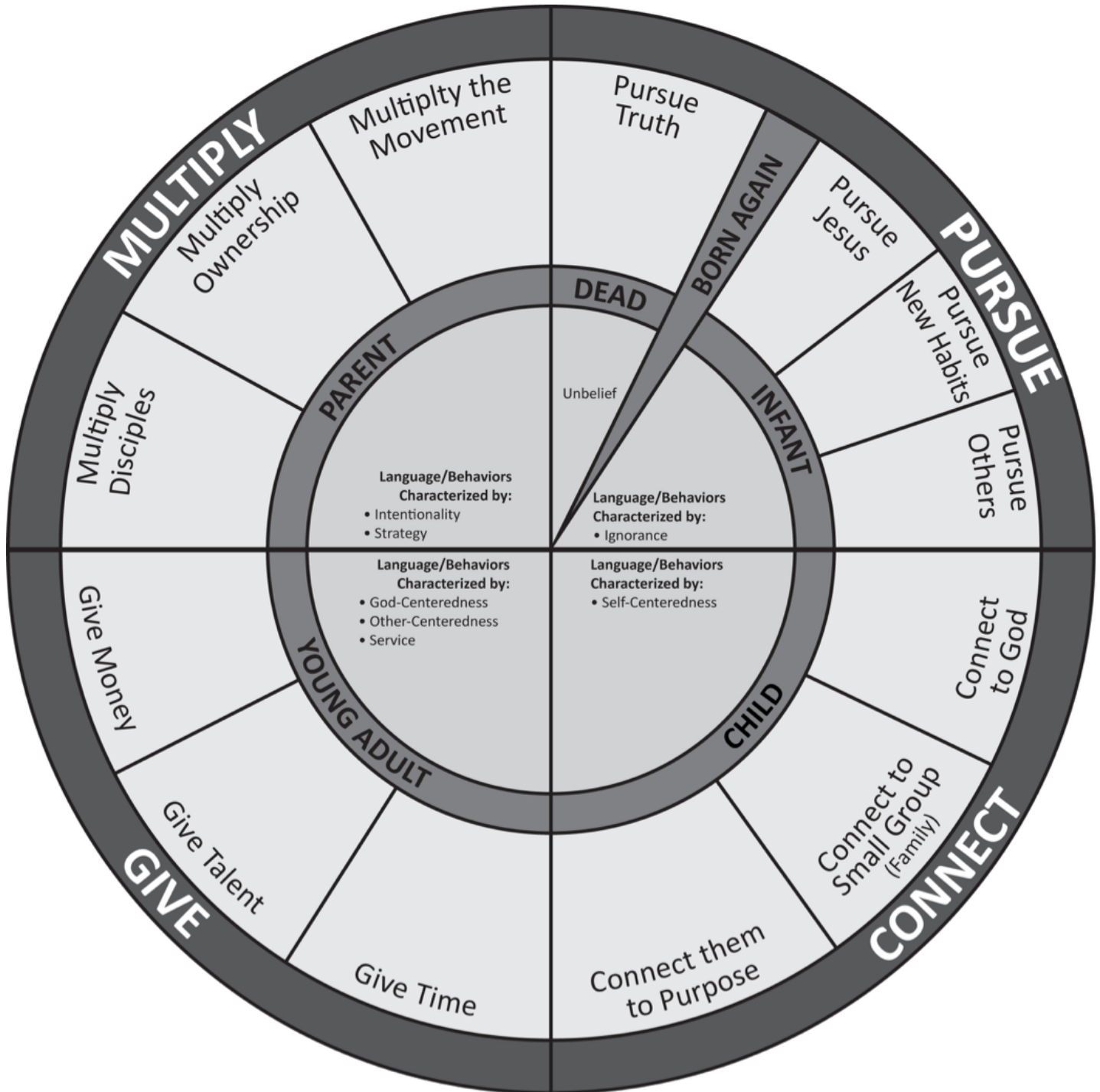
RELATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

- A relational environment is a group of between 3-16 people who are intentionally in relationship to grow as disciples through fellowship, accountability, teaching, prayer, and service.

OUR DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS

MAKE THE “BIG PICTURE OF THE DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS” (SEE BELOW) A FOUNDATIONAL PART OF ASSESSING THE DISCIPLESHIP STAGES OF YOURSELF AND OTHERS. ALSO, USE THIS TO DEVELOP GROWTH GOALS FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR GROUP MEMBERS.

THE BIG PICTURE OF OUR DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS



Ephesians #7 (5:1-22): Walk Carefully

In week 1 , we looked at the call in Ephesians 1 to capture our identity, calling, and power in the magnificent work of Christ and in God's adoption and redemption and choice. In Ephesians chapter 2 we examined the grace and peace that are given to us in Christ. In week 3 we looked at Paul's calling (and every Christian's calling) to be a proclaimer of the mystery revealed in Christ; the mysterious truth that God wants to bring all people together in one Christ-family. In week 4, we closed out chapter 3 by looking at Paul's prayer that the Ephesians (and all Christians) would be strengthened by the Spirit, rooted in Jesus' love, and able to experience God's all-surpassing power. Week 5 began our look at the practical implications of walking out Christ's calling in our lives by living out our gifting for the building up of the body in Ephesians 4:1-16. Week 6 (4:17-32) moved us even deeper into the idea that we are to walk differently in the world, setting aside old ways and walking in the renewal that God has brought us.

This week, we continue with the theme of "walking" out our faith. In Ephesians 5:1-20, Paul goes into greater detail about what we should not be doing if we are Christians. He also sums up what we should be doing. Though he says many things in this passage, the core of 5:1-20 can be summed up from two key passages. First, in 5:2, Paul implores us to walk carefully by imploring us to, "walk way in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." We are called to walk carefully by living a life of self-sacrificing love and service. Second, in 5:15-16, Paul pleads with us to "Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise. Making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." We are called to walk wisely, shunning the evil practices and attitudes of our current age and walking in purity and goodness. There are many things Paul and the Scriptures call us to do. However, they boil down to these two: 1) walk in the way of love, and 2) walk in wisdom and godliness. By embracing the renewal and call and power and grace and peace and love of God (told magnificently in Ephesians chs. 1-3), we can walk carefully and shine brightly in our world, living a life of thankfulness and praise.

Overview of Ephesians by The Bible Project (Recommended for Your Group):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y71r-T98E2Q>

Group Guide: Elements of Home Group + Discussion Questions

Guidelines: *Read and/or discuss the HG guidelines.*

Vision & Mission: *Share the vision & mission of RLM with your group.*

Icebreaker: *Take an opportunity to get your group going with a question/game.*

(Icebreaker Suggestion: What comes to mind when you hear the words “love” and “wisdom”?)

This Week’s Story: *Ephesians 5:1-20*

Set the Scene: *The passage for this week records **Paul’s practical and powerful call for us to walk carefully.** In 1) Ephesians 5:1-20 Paul eloquently pleads with the Ephesians (and us!) to walk carefully by living a life of sacrificial love and walking in practical wisdom & goodness.*

Read/Tell the Story: *Read the text or “story” it. (Suggested Order Below)*

1. Story this section or have the group read Ephesians 5:1-20.

Ask about the Story: *Was anything added or left out of the story?*

Discuss the Story: *Discuss with your group*

1. What stood out to you from the sermon or the text(s)? (**Head**)
2. Do you agree that 5:2 and 5:15-16 summarize this section well? Does walking carefully boil down to walking in “love” and “wisdom”? (**Head**)
3. If people were to describe your life, would the words “love” and “wisdom” be prominent in their description? (**Head/Heart**)
4. Do you believe that you can shine and “speak” the truth by sacrificing yourself for others and walking in practical wisdom (goodness & abstaining from evil)? (**Heart**)
5. What areas from Paul’s list in 5:3-7 are you doing well in? What areas are you struggling in? (**Hands**)
6. How can you embrace the light more in your life and be a shining “sermon” which proclaims the good news? (**Hands**)

Summary: *PAUL CALLS US TO WALK CAREFULLY IN THE WORLD BY FOCUSING OURSELVES ON A LIFE OF SACRIFICIAL LOVE & PRACTICAL WISDOM.*

Prayer: *Have someone from your group record the requests and pray together.*

Preparation for Next Time

Next Week: We continue the 9-part series through the *Letter to the Ephesians*.

Preparation: Make time with God to know/pursue Him through His Word, through prayer, and through reflection.

Passages to Read Prior to April 2, 2017.

Read through chapter 5:21-6:9 of Ephesians and study it & pray for God to illuminate your mind and heart so you can see its amazing meaning.