



THE PURSUING GOD
EASTER AT REAL LIFE MINISTRIES

Sunday April 16th at Mountain View HS
10:30 AM



HOMEGROUP GUIDE

For the week of April 16th, 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?

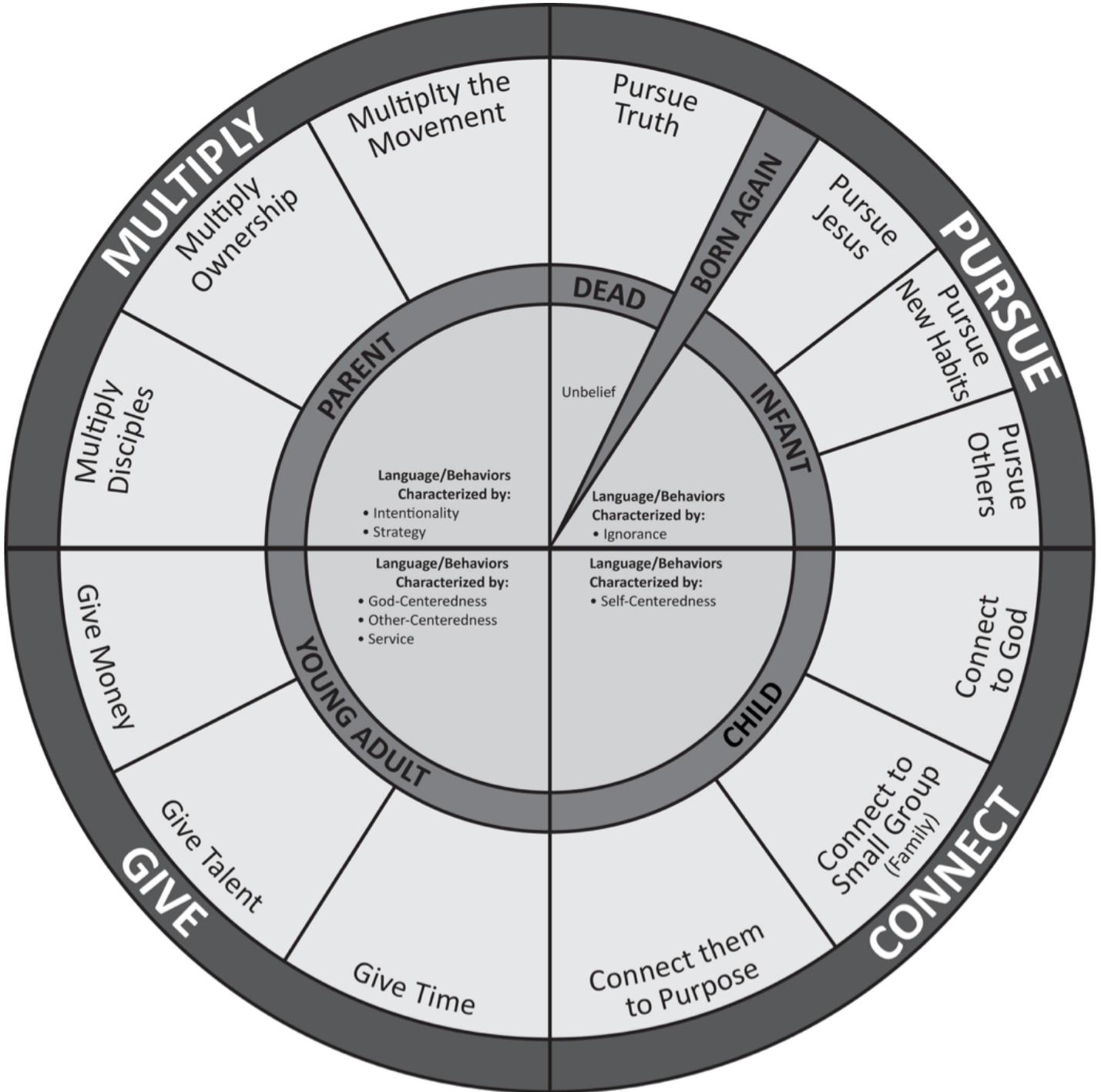
RELATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

- 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



Resurrection Sunday 2017: The Pursuing God

This week we have the opportunity to reflect on Jesus' resurrection as we come out of our Easter Sunday celebration. Yet, reflecting on the resurrection is really a chance to reflect on our Pursuing God! Despite our sin, God has always been pursuing humanity to restore us to relationship with Himself and peace with others. As we learned in our last study through Ephesians: "He [God] chose us in Him [Jesus] before the foundation of the world." (Eph. 1:4) God was never caught off guard by our rebellious departure from Him and His ways. Instead, he has always known that creating us would be a project of continual pursuit - pursuit of those He desperately loves and wants bring into His Kingdom goodness!

It is impossible to trace God's pursuit of us in one Home Group evening. However, below are some passages with brief commentary that can guide you on a brief journey through God's pursuing heart:

In Hot Pursuit (Genesis 3:14-24): Even as Adam & Eve sin and plunge creation into chaos and death, God is there! He disciplines and curses ... but, ultimately, he promises that there will be a redeemer who will crush the work of the Evil One and restore humanity. God sends Adam & Eve into exile, but even in this he covers them and sends them out to multiply and move forward the human story.

A "New Humanity" Begins (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6): Through the very human descendants of Abraham - specifically one particular descendant of Abraham (Messiah/Jesus) - God promises to bring about a blessing and restoration for all nations. God also demonstrates that the way we are made right is through faith/trust in God's promise & His work to restore (Gen. 15:6). The descendants of Abraham will become the nation of Israel.

Israel Rises and Falls ... But Will Rise Again (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-27ff.): Throughout its history Israel fails to carry the banner and be a "light to the nations." Ultimately, this leads to their exile. Still, God promises that He will continue to pursue them. Jeremiah promises them that even in their exile/punishment (after a long history of wandering) He plans a New Covenant to bring true knowledge of God and His ways to all people. Ezekiel proclaims that for the sake of His glory God will heal the hearts of Israel (and all who will come to trust in His Messiah) and bring about wholeness and goodness.

The Messiah [God's Anointed King] Comes to Pursue and Reclaim Humanity (Matthew 4:1-17; Luke 19:10; Luke 24:36-49; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21): The specific descendant/seed of Abraham is Jesus the Messiah. He breaks into the world as God's Pursuing Redeemer. He overcomes sin through His life and His death. He seeks and saves and pursues. All of those who come to see Him as their perfect, sacrificing, resurrected Savior, are called into a life of being His witnesses. The story of pursuit comes full-circle as God calls His people to pursue others with the good news about Jesus.

Shalom [Peace/Wholeness/World-Set-Right] in Revelation 21 & 22: As we come to the end of the Bible, the story of the Pursuing God comes to a conclusion as we see a renewed Heaven & Earth; God's Kingdom descending, and the peace and goodness and wholeness of Eden restored.

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dEh25pduQ8>

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 is your favorite story [real or fictional] of good triumphing over evil?)

This Week's Story: *Follow the Passages in This Week's Introduction (Above)*

Set the Scene: *The passages for this week flesh out (very briefly) the story of the Pursuing God! Utilize these and/or watch the Bible Project video and discuss.*

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

1. Walk through the passages above or watch the Bible Project video on "The Messiah."

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. What element(s) of the biblical story of God's pursuit are most encouraging to you? Which element(s) are confusing? (**Head**)
3. Are you able to see the hope of Easter? Do you believe that God's desire is to pursue you? (**Heart**)
4. Do you see how the Resurrection makes restoration possible? What is most encouraging to you about Jesus' resurrection? (**Heart**)
5. How can you live a resurrected life this week (try to name one specific thing you need to stop or start to live out resurrection this week)? (**Hands**)

Summary: *GOD HAS BEEN PURSUING YOU/US SINCE THE BEGINNING OF CREATION. HE HAS WORKED THROUGH THE AGES TO BRING ABOUT THE RESTORATION OF HUMANITY & CREATION. IN JESUS' OVERCOMING LIFE, SACRIFICIAL DEATH, AND VICTORIOUS RESURRECTION, THE PURSUIT OF GOD IS COMPLETED AND OPENED TO ALL.*

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

Preparation for Next Time

Next Week: We begin a series on emotional/spiritual health.

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

Passages to Read Prior to April 23rd, 2017.

Read through the story of Asaph in Psalm 73. Try to experience and meditate on the emotional/spiritual journey he takes.