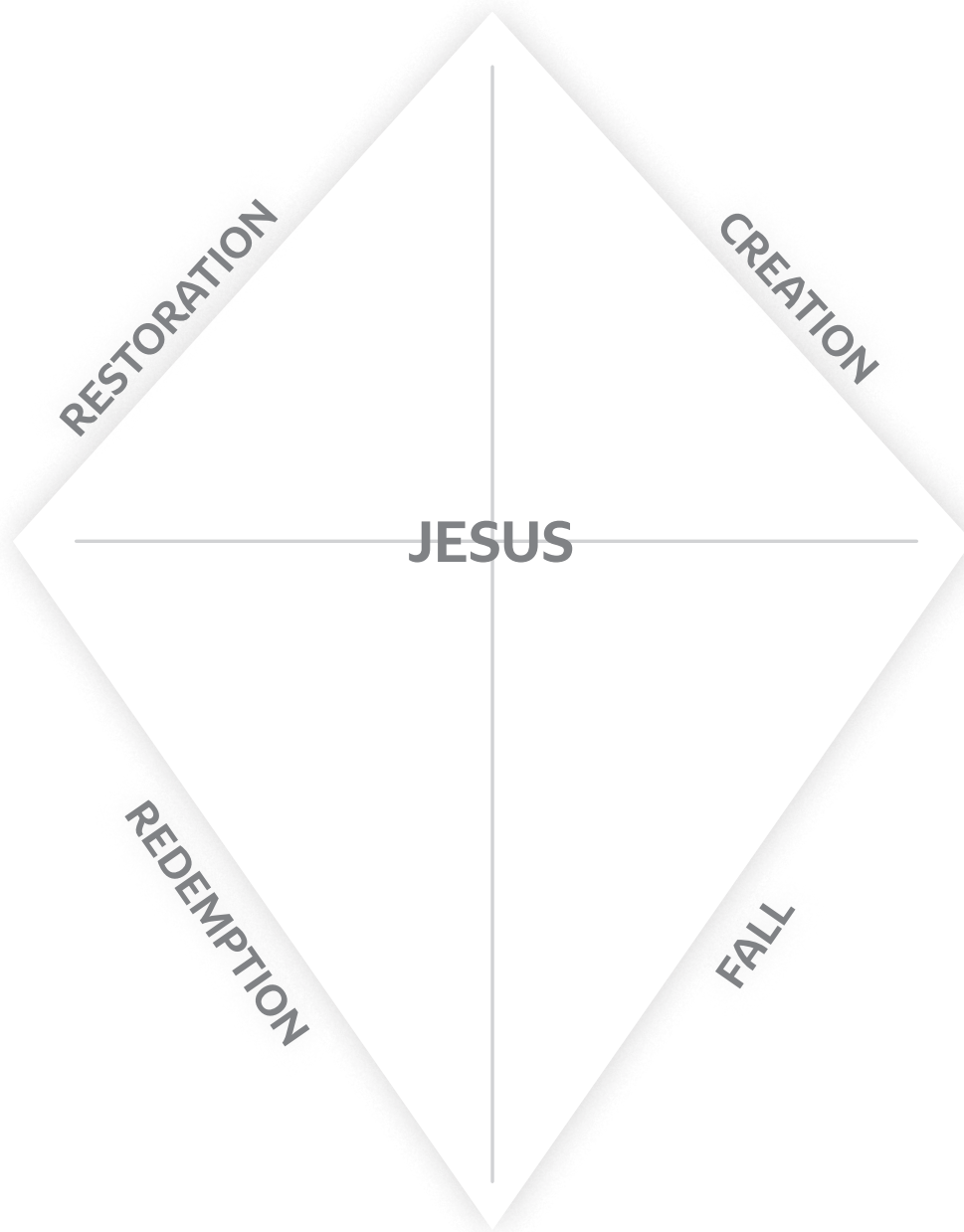


# STORY DIAMOND Following Jesus in Story



1. The Bible is a Story
2. The story has four movements
3. Jesus is the center of the story
4. The story can shape us

SIMPLE**CHURCH**

## BEST PRACTICES FOR USING THE STORY DIAMOND

- Remember this symbol is designed to be three things:

1. **A Picture to understand key ideas regarding disciple-making:**

What does this tell me about being a disciple?

2. **A Mirror to see our reflection in:**

What does this tell me about myself?

3. **A Window to look at all of life through:**

What should I do about it?

- We encourage you to read through the summaries five times before sharing it.
- Journal on the picture, mirror, and window questions above before sharing this. The degree to which you engage this symbol personally, is the degree to which you will be able to lead others into engagement.
- There are two versions included here: A four-minute summary and an extended summary.
- The main points are highlighted in teal in both versions. Commit these to memory.

- Key phrases are highlighted in red in the extended summary of the Story Diamond. Become fluent with these key phrases. The four-minute summary is comprised of only these key phrases.

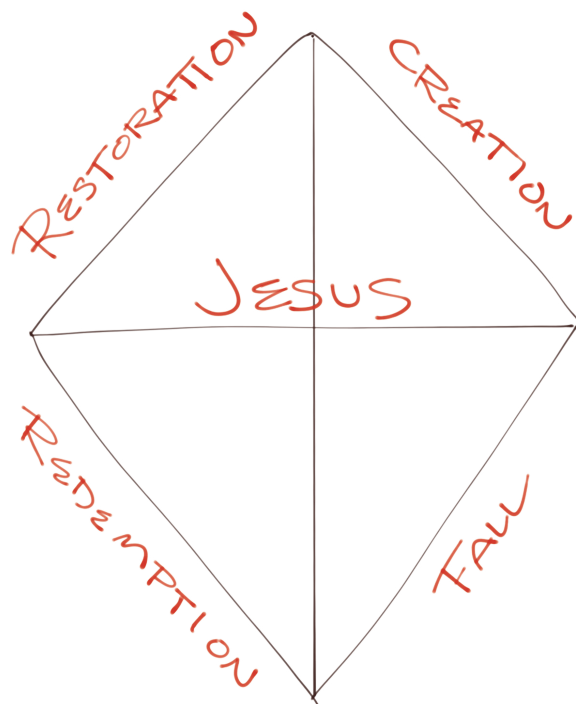
- We encourage you to draw and explain the four-minute summary out loud three times before sharing it with someone else.

- When you share it with someone, draw the Story Diamond on a napkin or sheet of paper. Leave that drawing with them.

- Remember to read the situation and the spiritual interest of the person you are sharing this with. It may be wisest to just share the brief highlight. Or if the interest is there, use the extended version, making it conversational by using the discussion questions.

- After you share it, encourage the person you've shared it with to share it with another spiritually curious or hungry friend or family member within the next few days. In so doing, you are training every disciple to be a disciple who can make disciples from day one. This builds in reproduction and multiplication as the norm for every disciple.

## STORY DIAMOND Following Jesus in Story



## A FOUR-MINUTE SUMMARY OF THE STORY DIAMOND

Everyone you meet lives within what has been called a dominant story. The dominant story has been told to us through our family systems and culture. It defines the way we view the world and ourselves. It's time for us to question the dominant story we are currently living in. Is it a story worth giving your life to? How would you like your story to be different?

As disciples, we follow Jesus in His Story. Jesus' Story is the better Story we can live in. His Story is the one Story where everyone can find purpose, transformation, belonging, and completion. The Story Jesus offers us is found in the Bible. The Story Diamond is a simple way to explain the Story Jesus is inviting us into. The Story Diamond has Four Facets.

### FACET #1: The Bible is a Story

The Bible at its core isn't 66 books with hundreds of mini-stories, but one book with one Story. Jesus' invitation is for us to get out of our seats and get into the Story. That is the most exciting invitation we'll ever receive.

### FACET #2: The Story Has Four Movements: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration

The Story in one sentence is this: God made it, we broke it, Jesus fixes it and we get to join Him in this project. The Story reveals to us WHAT GOD HAS DONE, WHAT GOD IS DOING, and WHAT GOD WILL DO. All of these culminate to reveal something of utmost importance: WHO GOD IS.

### FACET #3: Jesus is the Center of the Story

You'll notice the cross in the middle of the Story Diamond. That cross reminds us that Jesus is the center of the Story because Jesus reveals to us who God is. Every smaller story within the Bible points to him. Jesus is the highest, most definitive revelation of God to humanity. The full meaning of God's Story and our story is only revealed in Jesus. Jesus Christ – his life, death, resurrection and return is the interpretive key to understanding the Story and our stories.

### FACET #4: We are Invited to Let the Story Shape Us

Again, Jesus' invitation is for us to get out of our seats and get into The Story. Just like the diamond is the most precious of all gems, the Story (diamond) is the most precious of all books because it is "breathed out by God" (2 Tim. 3:16). How is it that we can let the Story shape us? We read the Story in a way that is Spirit-Led, Historically-Grounded, Jesus-Centered, Communally-Enhanced, and Personally-Applied.

Spirit-Led:  
To understand the Story, we must have our eyes opened by the Holy Spirit.

Historically-Grounded:  
We must learn to read the Story in a way that is grounded in its literary context and historical context.

Jesus-Centered:  
The person and work of Jesus is what unites and interprets the entire Story.

Communally-Enhanced:  
We can go deeper together by reading the Story in community.

Personally-Applied:  
The Story isn't here just as information, but for our transformation.

Start with one of the Gospels. Read a chapter every day. Meet with others who are reading the Story. Ask these questions as you read together:

1. What does the passage say? (Scripture)
2. What is the Spirit showing me about Jesus and about myself? (Observation)
3. What am I going to do about? (Application)
4. How can we pray and support you in this next step? (Prayer)
5. Who is someone you could share this with this week?

## EXTENDED VERSION OF THE STORY DIAMOND

### INTRODUCTION MOVE #1:

#### Everyone has a Dominant Story

Everyone you meet lives within what has been called a **dominant story**. “The dominant story is the most prominent, compelling and controlling informant for how people perceive God, others and the world. Some call this a world-view because it is the lens through which they view the world.”

One common dominant story in America goes like this—“*I want to get into my dream school, so I can get my dream job; Then, I will marry my dream spouse and we will buy our dream house. We'll have our dream kids and go on dream vacations. One day, I will fill up my dream 401k, so eventually I can live in my dream retirement.*” If that is my dominant story, that story will impact how I perceive God, others, and the world. Often in this story, for example, God becomes the one who is there to help me accomplish my dream. I fit God into the story of my dream.

**What are some of the words and phrases that describe some of the dominant stories people live in our culture?**

Explain. (Pleasure, Romance, The American Dream, Power, etc.)

**What is the dominant story you live within?** Most of us live within a story that's been told to us through our family systems and culture.

Our dominant story includes elements like:

- Our family history: What is the story of your family over the last few generations?
- Our shaping culture: What the primary ethnic and geographic culture that has shaped you?
- Our hopes: What are your greatest hopes for your future? Your family's future?
- Our hurts: What are the hurts, habits, and hang-ups that burden you?

**It's time for us to question the dominant story we are currently living in. Is it a story worth giving your life to?**

How would you like your story to be different? How can our story change in a way that increases meaning?

### INTRODUCTION MOVE #2:

#### Jesus has a Better Story for Us to Live In

As disciples, we decide to follow Jesus in His Story. Jesus' Story is the **Better Story we can live in**. His Story is the one Story where everyone can find purpose, transformation, belonging, and completion. **The Story Jesus offers us is found in the Bible**. The Bible can be an intimidating and confusing book. Some people read the Bible and it ends up making them more judgmental and arrogant. Some people read the Bible and it has little impact, just another book. Some people read the Bible and it ends up transforming them into more loving, wise, and centered people.

How do we engage the Scriptures in the same way Jesus did? How do we engage the Scriptures in a way that brings us into positive transformation? This is where the Story Diamond comes in. The Story Diamond is a simple way to explain the Story Jesus is inviting us into. (Draw the story diamond and write the four facets below or next to the diamond).

## STORY DIAMOND: THE FOUR FACETS

### FACET #1:

#### The Bible is a Story

**In essence, the Bible at its core isn't 66 books with hundreds of mini-stories, but one book with one Story.**

We'll call that sweeping Biblical Narrative “The Story.”

Many have come to understand the Bible as a series of short stories with a moral lesson attached. When we read the Bible that way, we can turn the Bible into a self-help book full of timeless principles that we plug in through merely human effort. That's why many people read the Bible and become judgmental and arrogant, “I know the rules and I'm better at applying them other people.” The Story Diamond calls us out of this myopic, modernistic, reductive approach into a narrative way of reading that gives us a new dominant story to live out of.

**Jesus' invitation is for us to get out of our seats and get into the Story.** That is the most exciting invitation we'll ever receive.

*The Story Diamond* will sweep us into the breath-taking scope of the entire Story of the Scripture. This broader, wide-eyed approach will place the smaller stories within their proper meaning inside the larger Story. Being a disciple of Jesus involves immersing yourself in God's

Story, embracing that Story with the entirety of your life and then moving that story forward in history.

"In the text of the Bible we have not only the drama of God's interaction with the world in and through Jesus (*in the past*) but also God's address to *future* actors as they seek to play a role in the unfolding drama in the world." The ultimate meaning of our stories can only be discovered and activated when we first understand The Story.

## FACET #2:

### The Story Has Four Movements

The Story has four movements: **CREATION, FALL, REDEMPTION, AND RESTORATION**. The Story in one sentence is this: God made it, we broke it, Jesus fixes it and we get to join Him in this project.

#### **CREATION (Genesis 1-2)**

God created us and made this world as His temple. He placed humanity here as His image-bearers and representatives, to serve as co-creators, priests, and kings. Creation was the overflow of the love, joy, generosity, and community between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One Hebrew word sums up the original intent of creation: shalom. Shalom means, peace, but it's far more than a cease-fire. The entire earth was a place of universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight. The story begins with peace between God and us, peace with each other, peace with creation, and even peace within ourselves. Everything was as it ought to be.

#### **FALL (Genesis 3)**

Humanity rebelled, shalom was broken, which brought decay and death. Disharmony and separation cracked our relationships with God, Creation, each other, and even ourselves.

#### **REDEMPTION**

##### **Redemption Prepared: Covenant Community (Genesis 4-Malachi 4)**

God begins his plan of redemption by creating a redemptive covenant community. Through Abraham, God creates a nation of people, who are invited to join Him in blessing and redeeming all nations and all things. However, the people of Israel find they can never keep the covenant and continually lose their way. The prophets proclaim that God will send a Messiah to rescue Israel. Furthermore, they describe a future world where shalom (peace and universal flourishing) is restored between God, humanity, and all of creation.

##### **Redemption Provided: Christ (Matthew-John and various NT epistolary passages explicating the work of Christ)**

God comes to earth in Jesus, the Messiah. He is fully God and fully man. Despite being tempted in every way as we are, Jesus lives without sin, fulfilling the covenant Israel or we could never keep. He preached the "good news of the Kingdom" and demonstrated the beauty and goodness of it with His life and miracles. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus confers that covenant faithfulness to us as a gift. Now all are invited to join in Covenant and the Kingdom, not based on their merits, but by Grace. Amazing grace is the only way to enter and live the Story. God became like us so that we could become like Him. In Jesus, God is for us, with us, one of us, and in us.

#### **RESTORATION**

##### **Restoration Proclaimed: Church (Acts - Revelation 19)**

Before Jesus, Israel was designed to be this new community God would use to bless the world. Before His Ascension, Jesus created a new community called the Church, for this purpose. All are invited! The church exists for the universal mission of making disciples in all nations and manifesting the Kingdom in all of the earth. The Bible makes this audacious claim that Jesus is now physically present on earth through this new community - through His body - through the Church. We are the hands and feet of Christ.

##### **Restoration Perfected: New Heaven and New Earth (Revelation 20-22)**

We wait for the return of Christ. The full restoration of the world will only be completed at the return of Jesus. At the second coming, evil will be judged and decisively defeated. Heaven and Earth will collide and co-mingle completely. The world will finally be as it was intended in Creation, a place of universal flourishing and universal shalom. The Bible describes this ultimate reality as the New Heaven and the New Earth. Until then, we join God in bringing that future into the present by announcing and demonstrating the Kingdom in our lives, our families, our neighborhoods, communities, and the world.

The Story reveals to us **WHAT GOD HAS DONE, WHAT GOD IS DOING, and WHAT GOD WILL DO**. How will we know what God wants to do in our life today? By understanding what God has done, is doing, and what God will do. Ultimately, all of that is summed up in the person of Jesus: His life, death, resurrection, and return. All of this reveals something of utmost importance: Who God is.

### FACET #3:

#### Jesus is the Center of the Story

*You'll notice the cross in the middle of the Story Diamond.*

**That cross reminds us that Jesus is the center of the Story because Jesus reveals to us who God is.** Every smaller story within the Bible points to him. All of Creation, God's covenant with Abraham, the story of Israel, the cries of the Psalms, the wisdom of Proverbs, the words of the Prophets, and the movement called the Church all find their origin and fulfillment in Jesus.

Jesus is the highest, most definitive revelation of God to humanity. The full meaning of God's Story and our story is only revealed in Jesus.

**In the past, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways. But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.... The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being. Hebrews 1:1-3**

Jesus is the radiance of God's glory, which means when God shines he looks like Jesus. He is the exact representation of God's very essence which means he is what God is like all the way down to the core.

Jesus is the absolute essential, full, unqualified revelation of God. He is not one revelation among others. Jesus sums up and completes all others.

Jesus holds the entire Story together. The whole Story is about Jesus Christ—who He is and what He came to do, what He is currently doing to redeem humanity, and what He is yet to do, the final restoration of all things. The Old Testament anticipates Jesus and the New Testament reveals Jesus. **Jesus Christ is the interpretive key to understanding the Story and our story.**

### FACET #4:

#### We are Invited to Let the Story Shape Us

**Again, Jesus' invitation is for us to get out of our seats and get into The Story.** How is it that we can let the Story shape us? We read the Story in a way that is Spirit-Led, Historically-Grounded, Communally-Enhanced, and Personally-Applied.

#### Spirit-Led

The Bible is a book written in many ways like any other, and can therefore be understood by anyone who is able to read. Yet the Bible is also unique because it is inspired

by God. Just like the diamond is the most precious of all gems, the Story (diamond) is the most precious of all books because it is "breathed out by God" (2 Tim. 3:16). Its writers "spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). To understand the Story, we must have our eyes opened by the Holy Spirit. Before you read the Bible, ask the Spirit of God to bring illumination and understanding.

#### Historically-Grounded

**We must learn to read the Story in a way that is grounded in its literary context and historical context.** Literary context simple means remembering that the Bible consists of many types of literary genres: Narrative, history, poetry, prophecy, apocalyptic, and so on. Just as we would read a historical novel in a different way than we would fiction, so it is with the Bible. We must read with a sensitivity to what kind of writing it is. Sensitivity to literary context also includes reading every text in the flow of the book as a whole Story as it points toward Jesus. Second, we must be aware of historical context. The fact that various sections of the Bible were written during certain periods in history in and around the land of Palestine means that a growing knowledge of events in those periods in history, and of the land of Palestine, will enrich our understanding of the Bible. Due to the historical distance between us and the authors of the Bible, readers of the Bible today will do well to sit under sound preaching and to consult various scholarly resources that help them in their personal study, such as commentaries and Bible dictionaries.

#### Jesus-Centered

Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, devoted students of Scripture, for their failure to see him throughout the Story: "You search the Scriptures," Jesus said, "because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me" (John 5:39). Later, when Jesus was on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection, he began with Moses and all the Prophets and interpreted to two bewildered and depressed disciples everything that was said about him in the Old Testament (Luke 24:27). He reminded all the disciples later that night that "everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms" (that is, the whole Old Testament) would be fulfilled (Luke 24:44).

As you read the Story from Genesis to Revelation, you will notice that there is a coherent story: creation, the fall, redemption, and restoration. These are not equal themes in the way the Bible treats them. Most of the Story is given to unfolding the third of these, the great drama of



redemption through Jesus Christ. But this redemption is set against the backdrop of creation and the fall, and this redemption will find its final completion in restoration and final judgment, when the original creation is restored to what it was originally intended to be. The Old Testament develops this story line, preparing for Jesus, and the New Testament fulfills this story line, portraying Jesus. **The person and work of Jesus is what unites and interprets the entire Story.** As we read both Old and New Testaments through the lens of redemption in Jesus Christ crucified, we will understand the whole Story the way God wants us to understand it.

### Communally-Enhanced

It's important to read the Story alone, but **we can go deeper together by reading the Story in community.** Community provides the wisdom, understanding, support, encouragement, and accountability we need to live out the Story.

### Personally-Applied

Unlike other books, which we read and "finish," followers of Jesus never truly "finish" reading the Story. Just as we must eat physical food each day if we are to be physically healthy, so we must eat spiritual food each day if we are to be spiritually healthy. **The Story isn't here just as information, but for our transformation.** Start with one of the Gospels. Read a chapter every day. Meet with others who are reading the Story. **Ask these questions as you read, write down what you're learning and discuss these when you meet:**

1. What does the passage say?
2. What is the Spirit saying to me in this passage?
3. What am I going to do about?
4. How can we pray and support you in this next step?
5. Now, who can you share this with this week?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Most people don't live their lives out of the story of God. What are some of the other stories that people in our culture are invited to live out of?
  - Which of those stories do you find yourself tempted to live out of? What are five key events that have shaped your story? How does God's story help you better interpret those events?
  - What is it about Jesus' story that is better? Why is it the best story for living?
  - What are the four movements of the story? What do each of them mean? How have you seen these four movements reflected in your story?
  - How and why is Jesus the center of the story?
  - How are you currently engaging the story? Check which of the following you are engaging...
    - ☐ Listening to the Bible?
    - ☐ Reading the Bible?
    - ☐ Studying the Bible?
    - ☐ Memorizing the Bible?
    - ☐ Meditating on the Bible?
    - ☐ Engaging the Bible in a small community of people?
    - ☐ Applying the Bible?
  - Which of the following do you want to grow in next?
- The Story Diamond is a picture, a mirror, and a window.
- ☐ Picture to understand: what does the Story Diamond show you about being a disciple of Jesus?
  - ☐ Mirror to reflect: what does the Story Diamond show you about yourself?
  - ☐ Window to see: what should you do about what you seen in and through the Story Diamond?

# KEY SCRIPTURES FOR THE STORY DIAMOND

## INTRODUCTION

### JESUS HAS A BETTER STORY

#### Key Passage

'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. ' John 10:10

#### FACET #1:

##### The Bible is a Story

#### Key Passage

'And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.' 1 Thessalonians 2:13

'These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. ' 1 Corinthians 10:11

#### FACET #2:

##### The Story Has Four Movements

#### THE STORY OF THE BIBLE IN TWENTY SHORT PASSAGES

1. **Creation** (Genesis 1:1, 27-28, 31)
2. **The Fall** (Genesis 3:6-7)
3. **Redemption Promised:** A Messiah Promised Made Pointing to Jesus (Genesis 3:15)
4. Abraham and the People of God (Israel) (Genesis 12:2-3)
5. Israel's Future King Pointing to King Jesus (Genesis 49:10)
6. The Exodus & the Passover Lamb Pointing to Jesus the Lamb of God (Exodus 12:21, 23)
7. King David of Israel Pointing Toward Jesus the Shepherd King (2 Samuel 7:12-13)
8. The Suffering Servant Who Will Die for the Sheep (Isaiah 53:6)
9. Future Resurrection and Judgment Promised (Daniel 12:2-3)
10. New Creation Promised (Isaiah 65:17, 20-25)
11. God's People Wait in Exile for the Messiah (Jeremiah 29:4-14)
12. **Redemption Fulfilled:** the Kingdom: Jesus is Our King (Mark 1:14-15)

13. The Cross: Jesus is Our Savior (John 19:30)
14. Esurrection: Jesus is Our Lord (Romans 1:3-4)
15. **Restoration Promised:** Jesus will Restore All Things (Acts 3:21)
16. The Jesus Mission: Make Disciples! (Matthew 28:18-20)
17. The Gospel: The Good News About Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:1-8)
18. The Church: The Family of Jesus (Matthew 16:18, Acts 1:8)
19. The Return of Jesus and the Final Judgment of Evil (James 5:7-9)
20. **Restoration Fulfilled** (Revelation 21:1-5)

#### FACET #3:

##### Jesus is the Center of the Story

#### Key Passage

In the past, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways. But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.... The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being. Hebrews 1:1-3

#### Supporting Passages:

John 5:16-47

'You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, ' John 5:39

Luke 24:13-32

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. Luke 24:27

Colossians 1:15-20

Philippians 2:5-11

#### FACET #4:

##### We are Invited to Let the Story Shape Us

#### Key Passage:

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ' 2 Timothy 3:16-17



## Supporting Passages:

### Spirit-Led

'For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. 'Hebrews 4:12

### Historically-Grounded

'Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Luke 1:1-4

### Jesus-Centered

7 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. Luke 24:27

### Community-Enhanced

'They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.'

Acts 2:42-47

### Personally-Applied

'Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

James 1:22-25

## Discovery Bible Studies for Story Diamond

### 6 Week Study

Week 1: Genesis 1:1-31

Week 2: Genesis 3:1-24

Week 3: Mark 2:1-12

Week 4: Acts 2:29-41

Week 5: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

Week 6: Revelation 21:1-8

### Additional or Replacement Passages

CREATION: John 1:1-14, Psalm 33:4-11

FALL: Romans 3:9-20

REDEMPTION: Genesis 12:1-3, John 3:1-21, Romans 5:1-11, Ephesians 2:1-10

RESTORATION: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Revelation 21:1-8

### DBS Process (S.O.A.P.)

#### Scripture

- Read the passage
- Have someone put it in their own words

#### Observe

- What stands out to you?
- What does this text say about God?
- What does this text say about people?

#### Apply

- How can you specifically live out this passage in the next few days? (Everyone creates an 'I WILL' STATEMENT)

#### Person

- Who are you going to tell about what you discovered this week?

- 
- <sup>i</sup> Engaging the Story, GCM Collective, Engaging the Story, Jeff Vanderstelt, May 6th, 2010;
- <sup>ii</sup> The Bible As Improv, Ron Martoia, Zondervan (February 23, 2010)
- <sup>iii</sup> Engaging the Story, GCM Collective, Engaging the Story, Jeff Vanderstelt, May 6th, 2010; Theology and Practice, Bruce Riley Ashford, Chapter "The Story of Mission: The Grand Biblical Narrative" by Dave Nelson, B&H Academic (September 1, 2011)
- <sup>iv</sup> The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate, John H. Walton, IVP Academic
- <sup>v</sup> Not The Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin, Cornelius Plantinga Jr., William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company (January 1, 1995)
- <sup>vi</sup> Inspired by the article, "How to Read and Understand The Bible," <https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/how-to-read-and-understand-the-bible/>

# IDENTITY TRIANGLE Following Jesus in Identity



## **FATHER: The Perfect Dad**

WE: Family of God

ME: Beloved Child of Abba

## **SPIRIT: Sender & Guide**

WE: Missionaries

ME: Temple of the Holy Spirit

## **SON: The Servant King**

WE: Servants of the King

ME: Disciple of Jesus

## BEST PRACTICES FOR USING THE IDENTITY TRIANGLE

- Remember this symbol is designed to be three things:

1. **A Picture to understand key ideas regarding disciple-making:**  
What does this tell me about being a disciple?

2. **A Mirror to see our reflection in:**  
What does this tell me about myself?

3. **A Window to look at all of life through:**  
What should I do about it?

- We encourage you to read through the summaries five times before sharing it.

- Journal on the picture, mirror, and window questions above before sharing this. The degree to which you engage this symbol personally, is the degree to which you will be able to lead others into engagement.

- There are two versions included here: A four-minute summary and an extended summary.

- The main points are highlighted in teal in both versions. Commit these to memory.

- Key phrases are highlighted in red in the extended summary of the Identity Triangle. Become fluent with these key phrases. The four-minute summary is comprised of only these key phrases.

- We encourage you to draw and explain the four-minute summary out loud three times before sharing it with someone else.

- When you share it with someone, draw the Identity Triangle on a napkin or sheet of paper. Leave that drawing with them.

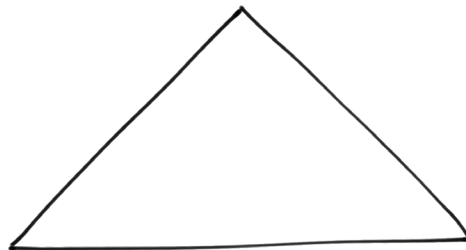
- Remember to read the situation and the spiritual interest of the person you are sharing this with. It may be wisest to just share the brief highlight. Or if the interest is there, use the extended version, making it conversational by using the discussion questions.

- After you share it, encourage the person you've shared it with to share it with another spiritually curious or hungry friend or family member within the next few days. In so doing, you are training every disciple to be a disciple who can make disciples from day one. This builds in reproduction and multiplication as the norm for every disciple.

## IDENTITY TRIANGLE Following Jesus in Identity

FATHER: THE PERFECT DAD

WE: Family  
ME: Beloved Child



SPIRIT: SENDER + GUIDE

WE: Missionaries  
ME: Temple

SON: THE SERVANT KING

WE: Servants  
ME: Disciple

## FOUR MINUTE SUMMARY OF THE IDENTITY TRIANGLE

Who am I? What is my identity? Everyone struggles to answer these questions.

**What are some common things on which people base their identity?** Politics. Sexuality. Passions or Gifts. Careers or work. Roles and Relationships. It's usually some combination of all of these. **Most of us just pick some combination of 3-5 roles as the foundation for our core identity.** For example, I could say, "My identity is comprised of my family roles: Spouse, Father, Son, and Brother, along with my work roles: Pastor and Teacher. I'm also passionate about the outdoors and music, so you could say I'm a hiker and musician." (Customize this based on your current roles)

In each of these roles, we have this equation running that gives us our sense of worth within that role. Once people have a sense of what their roles are, their sense of value on a daily basis is based on the following equation.

**Identity or Worth = My Performance X Other's Opinions.**

That's how most people get their sense of identity and worth. How do I know who I am? What are my roles? Then how do I know if I have worth in those roles? Well, how well am I doing at this current role and what do other people think of me?

**How well is this working for us? When we reflect on that, it's easy to see how vulnerable this combination of roles, performance, and opinions leaves us.** Most of us struggle with this constant sense of just not measuring up. On top of all that, many of our roles end up competing with each other, leaving us caught in a constant tension of robbing Peter to pay Paul. We end up running back and forth between our different roles, trying to please everyone, but feeling like we're cheating everyone.

**Wouldn't you agree, we need something deeper than seasonal roles, our performance level and other people's opinions in shaping our identity?** If there was something with more permanence, that could last through a lifetime, would you want to know it? I sure would! How can we find a deeper identity that leads to a sense of peace and purpose?

**Jesus came to reveal to us our deepest and truest Identity.** As disciples, we follow Jesus in Identity. Jesus offers us an Identity in a Story where everyone can find their unique purpose, deep transformation, and a radical sense of belonging. The Identity Triangle is a simple way to explain the Identity to which Jesus is inviting us.

**The Identity Triangle is built on this idea: If we know who**

**God is, then we will know who we are.**

We can only understand the question, "Who am I?" by asking first, "Who is God?" Look at the three aspects of God's identity revealed to us by Jesus.

*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...*  
Matthew 28:19 (NIV)

Baptizing people *into the name of* is about establishing them into their new Trinitarian Identity. In Christ, God is our **Father** and we are His **Family**; Jesus is our **King** and we are His **Servants**; the Holy Spirit is our Guide and Sender and we are His **Missionaries**.

**The Father is our Perfect Dad.**

That means...

**WE: The Family of God**

**Me: Beloved Child of Abba**

If God is our Perfect Dad, then we now understand ourselves to be members of a royal family, the family of God, made up of former ragamuffins. We live as dedicated brothers and sisters, caring for, supporting, and challenging each other. Each of us is a beloved son or daughter of Abba, in whom the Father is pleased. He's crazy about us.

**Jesus is our Servant King.**

That means...

**We: Servants of the King**

**Me: Disciple of Jesus.**

If Jesus is our Servant King, we now understand ourselves to be servants of the King. Just like Jesus laid down his life for us, we will lay down our lives for others in service. Each of us is a disciple of Jesus. Being a disciple means following Jesus as Lord, doing whatever Jesus teaches us to do, whenever He tells us to do it and wherever He wants us to do it.

**The Holy Spirit is our Sender and Guide.**

That means...

**We: Missionaries**

**Me: Temple of the Holy Spirit**

If the Spirit is our Sender and Guide, then we now understand ourselves to be the Sent Ones, each of us a missionary filled with the Spirit. We will join God in his work of redeeming people and places through Jesus, starting where we live, work, study, and play.

**From His identity foundation, our identity flows.**

Our new identity in Jesus is not contingent on our changing roles, our performance or the opinions of others. This identity is built on an eternal foundation, based on what Jesus thinks of us, His finished work on the cross, and the unchanging character of God, revealed fully in the person of Jesus.

## EXTENDED VERSION OF THE IDENTITY TRIANGLE

Who am I? What is my identity? Everyone struggles to answer these questions. It's impossible to live without a sense of identity. We all continually work out our answer to that question.

What are some common things that people base their identity on?

Politics, "I'm a conservative or I'm a liberal." Sexuality, "I'm straight, I'm gay." Passions or Gifts, "I'm a musician. I'm an athlete. I'm an underwater basket weaver." Careers, "I am a teacher, I'm a business owner, I'm a CEO. I'm a pastor." Roles, "I'm a parent, I'm a son or daughter, I'm a sibling."

Most of us just pick some combination of 3-5 roles as the foundation for our core identity. For example, I could say, "My identity is comprised of my family roles: Spouse, Father, Son, and Brother, along with my work roles: Pastor and Teacher. I'm also passionate about the outdoors and music, so you could say I'm a hiker and musician." (Customize this based on your current roles)

What are the roles you currently play? ( Write those out on the paper)

In each of these roles, we have this equation running in the background, like a computer program that gives us our sense of worth within that role. Once people have a sense of what their roles are, their sense of value on a daily basis is based on the following equation.

Identity or Worth = My Performance X Other's Opinions.

That's how most people get their sense of identity and worth. How do I know who I am? What are my roles? Then how do I know if I have worth in those roles? Well, how well am I doing at this current role and what do other people think of me? How well is this working for us?

Here's the problem with this approach, this leads to a roller coaster experience. If I'm momentarily doing well with those roles, I feel great. But guess what? I'm not very far from messing one of those roles up, then I feel lousy. We end up using other people to try to find our worth, which is selfish. On top of that, most of these roles are seasonal, which leaves us vulnerable to what you could call Identity Theft. These roles either change or fade out over time. Sometimes, naturally and gradually, or in some cases, instantly and tragically. Either way, we're left feeling like a victim of identity theft.

Share some personal examples.

I can tell you about my friend who took the role of successful sales manager for an entire region of the country. He was loved and adored by his team. In the all-out pursuit of that role, he ended up being an absentee father and husband. He lost those relationships. He lost the role of husband and father because he was pursuing successful salesmen role. Identity theft

I can tell you about a college football player who confided in me, "I'm a cliché, man. Rock star athlete in high school. Full ride college scholarship to a Big Ten University. I get injured my sophomore year and I can't play anymore. I was left asking, "Who am I now? Since I was a kid, I've known myself as a football player. Who am I when I can longer be a football player?" Identity theft.

I know a precious woman whose whole identity was wrapped up in the role of being a good mother and good daughter. Then, when the kids moved out and her mom died, all during the same season of life, she was left asking, "Who am I now?"

When we reflect on that, it's easy to see how vulnerable this combination of roles, performance, and opinions leaves us. Most of us struggle with this constant sense of just not measuring up. On top of all that, many of our roles end up competing with each other, leaving us caught in a constant tension of robbing Peter to pay Paul. We end up running back and forth between our different roles, trying to please everyone, but feeling like we're cheating everyone.

Wouldn't you agree, we need something deeper than seasonal roles, our performance level and other people's opinions in shaping our identity? If there was something with more permanence, that could last through a lifetime, would you want to know it? I sure would! How can we find a deeper identity that leads to a sense of peace and purpose?

Jesus came to reveal to us our deepest and truest Identity. As disciples, we follow Jesus in Identity. Jesus offers us an Identity in a Story everyone can find their unique purpose, deep transformation, and a radical sense of belonging. The Identity Triangle is a simple way to explain the Identity to which Jesus is inviting us.

The Identity Triangle is built on this idea: If we know who God is, then we will know who we are.

The Author of Life created each of us with an identity. In the same way that our DNA comes from our biological parents, our spiritual identity comes from our Creator.

*"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female he created them." Genesis 1:27*

We were created in the image of God. We bear His image, just like our physical appearance resembles that of our biological parents. When someone looks at a child, they see her father's eyes, or her mother's chin. If we are made in the image of God, our identity flows from His. We can only understand the question, "Who am I?" by asking first, "Who is God?"

Here's the challenge: Our identity was marred by our own brokenness, which we've already explored. Like a plaster bust that falls from the fireplace mantle, our identity has been broken or damaged. Rather than finding our identity in the clear reflection of the Creator, we've been trying to find it in the warped mirrors of our roles, our performance, and other's opinions. Many people spend their whole lives living out of this false self. It's a tragedy and a misery.

But even though we are broken and damaged, that is not the end of the Story. Our Creator will not discard us, He still sees us as His masterpieces, in need of redemption and restoration. Jesus paid the price to buy us back through His life, death, and resurrection, so we can now experience a restoration process through His Spirit in us.

When our Identity is restored in Jesus, we are given a new identity, a new purpose and an important part in God's Story. A restored sense of Identity, my true self, will transform my life and my relationships.

So, back to the original question: "Who am I?,"

We can only understand the question, "Who am I?" by asking first, "Who is God?" Look at the three aspects of God's identity revealed to us by Jesus.

*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..." Matthew 28:19 (NIV)*

Baptizing people into the name of is about establishing them into their new Trinitarian Identity. In Christ, God is our Father and we are His Family; Jesus is our Lord and we are His Servants; the Holy Spirit is our Guide and Sender and we are His Missionaries.

Let's walk through God's identity first. Who is God?

The Father is our Perfect Dad.

*"But now, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand." Isaiah 64:8*

*"... you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'" Romans 8:15b*

The word, Abba, in Jesus' culture, was a particularly affectionate term for Father, the equivalent of Daddy, in our day. We've all experienced broken earthly Fathers, but Jesus reveals to us the God who is the perfect Dad.

Jesus is our Servant King.

*"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45*

Unlike earthly Kings that lord over others and use servants as a means to their benefit, Jesus is the Servant King, who gives His life to benefit and elevate the lives of His servants. The ultimate symbol of this is His crucifixion.

The Holy Spirit is our Sender and Guide.

*"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." John 14:26*

When we trust Jesus as our Lord and King, the Spirit of God makes His home in us. In each day, He is our Guide in how to live and our Sender, awakening us to the mission of God that we can be a part of, Jesus' plan to restore all things.

From His identity foundation, our identity flows. Our new identity in Jesus is not contingent on our changing roles, our performance or the opinions of others. This identity is built on an eternal foundation, based on what Jesus thinks of us, His finished work on the cross, and the unchanging character of God, revealed fully in the person of Jesus.

In addition, there are both communal and personal aspects to our identity in Christ.

We: Family

*"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:18*

Me: Beloved Child of Abba

*"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God," John 1:12*



If God is our Father, then we now understand ourselves to be members of a royal family, made up of former ragamuffins. We live as dedicated brothers and sisters, caring for, supporting, and challenging each other. We will love each other like the Father has loved us. Each of us is a beloved son or daughter of Abba, in whom the Father is pleased. He's crazy about us.

#### We: Servants

*"For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake."*  
2 Corinthians 4:5

#### Me: Disciple of Jesus.

*If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.* John 12:26

*So Jesus said ..., "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* John 8:31-32

If Jesus is our Servant King, we now understand ourselves to be servants of the King. Just like Jesus laid down his life for us, we will lay down our lives for others in service. Jesus, being God, was willing to humble himself and serve us, even wash feet. We will do the same. Each of us is a disciple of Jesus. Being a disciple means following Jesus as Lord, doing whatever Jesus teaches us to do, whenever He tells us to do it and wherever He wants us to do it.

#### We: Missionaries

*"Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.'"* John 20:21

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* Acts 1:8

#### Me: Temple of the Spirit

*"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;"* 1 Corinthians 6:19

If the Spirit is our Sender and Guide, then we now understand ourselves to be Missionaries, each of us a temple of the Holy Spirit. We will respond to our unique missional impulse to go to those Jesus leads us to—to live among them, like He lived among us. We are sent by the Spirit to restore all things to God through Jesus Christ. We will join God in his work of redeeming people and places through Jesus, starting where we live, work, study, and play.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some of the typical sources people use to base their sense of identity on?
- Why are those insufficient? How do they make us insecure and vulnerable?
- Which of those sources of identity, apart from Jesus, do you find yourself tempted to live out of?
- What is it about the identity Jesus gives you is better? Why is it the best identity for living?
- What are the three names of God's that Jesus revealed us in Matthew 28:19? What do each of them reveal to us about God's character? How have you experienced that?
- How and why is it that our identity in Christ gives us total security and worth?
- How can you grow deeper into your identity in Christ?

The Identity Triangle is a picture, a mirror, and a window.

- Picture to understand: what does the Identity Triangle show you about being a disciple of Jesus?
- Mirror to reflect: what does the Identity Triangle show you about yourself?
- Window to see: what should you do about what you see in and through the Identity Triangle?

# Discovery Bible Studies for the Identity Triangle

## Father

Ephesians 2:19-22

Romans 8:9-17

## Son

John 13:1-17

John 15:1-8

## Holy Spirit

\*John 14:12-27

Acts 1:6-8

Matthew 28:16-20

## DBS Process (S.O.A.P.)

### Scripture

- Read the passage
- Have someone put it in their own words

### Observe

- What stands out to you?
- What does this text say about God?
- What does this text say about people?

### Apply

- How can you specifically live out this passage in the next few days? (Everyone creates an 'I WILL' STATEMENT)

### Person

- Who are you going to tell about what you discovered this week?

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Inspired by the work of Soma Communities, Jeff Vanderstelt and  
Caesar Kalinowski

<http://www.somatacoma.org/who-we-are/>



# IMPACT EQUATION Following Jesus in Transformation

$$C_{\text{H A R A C T E R}} \times C_{\text{A L L I N G}} = | \text{I M P A C T}$$

SIMPLE**CHURCH**

## BEST PRACTICES FOR USING THE IMPACT EQUATION

- Remember this symbol is designed to be three things:
  - A Picture to understand key ideas regarding disciple-making:**  
What does this tell me about being a disciple?
  - A Mirror to see our reflection in:**  
What does this tell me about myself?
  - A Window to look at all of life through:**  
What should I do about it?
- We encourage you to read through the summaries five times before sharing it.
- Journal on the picture, mirror, and window questions above before sharing this. The degree to which you engage this symbol personally, is the degree to which you will be able to lead others into engagement.
- There are two versions included here: A four-minute summary and an extended summary.
- The main points are highlighted in teal in both versions. Commit these to memory.
- Key phrases are highlighted in red in the extended summary of the Impact Equation. Become fluent with these key phrases. The four-minute summary is comprised of only these key phrases.
- We encourage you to draw and explain the four-minute summary out loud three times before sharing it with someone else.
- When you share it with someone, draw the Impact Equation on a napkin or sheet of paper. Leave that drawing with them.
- Remember to read the situation and the spiritual interest of the person you are sharing this with. It may be wisest to just share the brief highlight. Or if the interest is there, use the extended version, making it conversational by using the discussion questions.
- After you share it, encourage the person you've shared it with to share it with another spiritually curious or hungry friend or family member within the next few days. In so doing, you are training every disciple to be a disciple who can make disciples from day one. This builds in reproduction and multiplication as the norm for every disciple.

IMPACT EQUATION Following Jesus in Transformation

CHARACTER  $\times$  CALLING = IMPACT

## FOUR MINUTE SUMMARY OF THE IMPACT EQUATION

Jesus graciously empowers us to become like Him. He also expects us to become like Him.

*For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.* Romans 8:29

We become like Jesus as He dwells within us through His Holy Spirit.

*Christ in you, the hope of glory.* Colossians 1:27

Jesus, through the work of the Holy Spirit, transforms us in two ways; by bearing spiritual fruit in us and by depositing spiritual gifts into us. Our privilege as followers of Jesus is to cultivate that spiritual fruit (OUR CHARACTER) and to optimize our spiritual gifts (OUR CALLING). When the FOCUS of our disciple-making is developing these two outcomes, the Holy Spirit accomplishes His intended IMPACT in the world.

### Outcome #1 of Christ in you: Character.

*The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.* Galatians 5:22-23

Jesus is the epitome of godly character, and this character is summed up in these verses. As we read in Romans 8:29, Jesus' plan is for us to become more and more like Him.

This first evidence of spiritual transformation is simple. You know you are maturing in Jesus if you are bearing this fruit. This fruit is born in us as we abide with Jesus through the ancient disciplines. A few of these disciplines are prayer, bible reading, journaling, and mutual accountability.

### Outcome #2 of Christ in you: Calling.

*We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.* Ephesians 2:10

In Ephesians 2:10, we learn that Jesus has a purpose for us. We call that purpose our calling. Our calling is primarily expressed as we discover, develop, and deploy our spiritual and natural gifts in our area of passion.

*God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.* 1 Peter 4:10

This second evidence of spiritual transformation is simple. You know you are maturing in Jesus if He is accomplishing His work through you to serve others.

### The Result: The Hope of Glory, or Impact.

We have not been transformed for our benefit only. We have been transformed to share that transformation with others. As we grow in character and calling, Jesus Impacts the world around us with His grace and power.



# EXTENDED VERSION OF THE IMPACT EQUATION

## Introduction: The Essence of Transformation

Jesus graciously empowers us to become like Him. He also expects us to become like Him.

*For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son. Romans 8:29*

But, what does that transformation look like? What is the definition of a disciple? How do you help a person become a disciple? There are many answers to this, and most of them lack a helpful degree of specificity. The most common explanation I hear is that a disciple is one that becomes more and more like Jesus. While I agree with this statement, it begs the question, "In what way?"

A lack of clarity on the outcomes of discipleship makes it very difficult to determine the strategies to help them accomplish them. **Fortunately, the Bible provides clarity on what the outcomes of disciple-making are. If we focus on those outcomes, we will yield more enthusiastic and effective disciples.**

The search for the outcomes begins with an understanding of God Himself. God is three persons. The Father ordains our salvation. The Son accomplishes our salvation. The Spirit is the one who applies our salvation. If the Spirit applies our salvation, it begs the question, "What does that application look like?"

First, **the Spirit cultivates spiritual fruit in us. The spiritual fruit listed in the Bible are simply the character traits of Jesus. Second, the Spirit deposits spiritual gifts into us. The spiritual gifts are a key indicator of the calling Jesus has for our lives.** Every command Jesus gives us falls into one of these transformation buckets.

**Our focus, then, of disciple-making is to develop the character and calling of those who follow Jesus.** The power of having specific outcomes in disciple-making is that we can create processes to help people accomplish these objectives. Those processes will be listed below.

**The result of focusing on these two outcomes is impact.**

As disciples allow Jesus to cultivate His character in them, and as they allow Jesus to demonstrate His power through their calling, it will change the world around them for the good. This powerful mystery of transformation is summed up in Colossians.

*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*  
Colossians 1:27

**Most disciple-making environments focus on the content of a study.** People considering joining a group will often ask, "What are you studying?" While content is a crucial element of any transformation process, it cannot be the focus. As an example of the role content plays, consider this statement of Jesus; *"You will know the truth and the truth will set you free."* Jesus is placing an exceptionally high value on the truth, but the truth is a **means** to an end... not the end itself. The end, or the purpose or truth is **freedom**.

**As character and calling remain the focus of your disciple-making efforts, you will see more genuine transformation in people... not simply an accumulation of Christian knowledge.**

## Outcome #1 of Christ in You: Character.

*The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23*

Jesus is the epitome of godly character, and this character is summed of in these verses. As we read in Romans 8:29, Jesus' plan is for us to become more and more like Him.

I have a grandfather who was a Baptist country preacher. He read the bible every night. He quoted the bible to us often. He was also one of the meanest men I have ever met. He verbally bombarded his wife and family with critical words. He was not patient. He was not kind. He was not gentle.

Was Jesus in Him?

Many will answer this question based upon the declarations of faith my grandfather had made. If he had believed that Jesus rose from the dead" and "declared that Jesus is Lord," then he must have been saved because Jesus is in Him.

I want to believe that, but there are a few things that challenge that view. The first challenge is how Jesus interacted with a fig tree as He entered into Jerusalem. The tree had leaves but it did not have fruit on it. The lack of fruit prompted Jesus to curse the tree. It withered and died in a day. The point? If you have leaves, you should have

fruit. If you do not bear fruit, you are not really attached to Jesus' vine and are at risk of being eliminated.

In 2 Peter 1, Peter discusses the gradual progression of love in a person's life as they follow Jesus. The list looks much like the fruit of the Spirit. After listing this evidence of the Spirit's presence Peter writes, *"For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins."* 2 Peter 1: 8-9

My grandfather would have passed a bible knowledge test. He would have passed a preaching proficiency test in some circles. He would not have passed a fruit check. **Jesus is looking for fruit. It is the evidence of His presence in our lives. Jesus came to change our character.**

How does Jesus cultivate this fruit in our lives?

This fruit is born in us as we abide with Jesus through the ancient habits, or disciplines. A few of these disciples are prayer, bible reading, journaling, and mutual accountability/submission. Developing these habits help us abide with Jesus. **It is important to remember that these habits are not the goal, or the end. They are simply the means to an end. The end is fellowship with and obedience through Jesus.**

As we abide with Jesus, He will reveal things about us that can be more fruitful. He will also prompt us to take actions that we would not have taken on our own. These "obedience opportunities" are the actual experiences that render the fruit in our lives.

One example of this is a time I was in a heated conflict with my daughter. Our voices escalated during this conflict and we went to sleep still angry with one another. I woke up the next morning and my bible reading included the "A gentle answer turns away wrath," passage. Jesus clearly let me know that I was not gentle. I chose to ask for forgiveness and He generously gave it to me. Jesus, however, was not done. He clearly challenged me to also ask for forgiveness from my daughter and to give her permission to remind me of this verse the next time I start to escalate. At this point I had a choice, I could obey Him which would be hard, or I could not obey Him, which would be easier in the short term but harder in the long term.

Truthfully, the only thing threatened by Jesus' challenge was my ego. Not surprisingly, it is my ego that must die for Jesus' character to emerge. I chose to take a nick out of my ego and obey Jesus. This experience, coupled with hinders of similar experiences with Jesus, has gradually born fruit in my life.

**Jesus' character is available to anyone who asks for it and focuses on cultivating it.**

## Outcome #2 of Christ in You: Calling.

*We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*  
Ephesians 2:10

Whereas character involves who we are **becoming**, our calling involves what we should focus on **doing**. In Ephesians 2:10, we learn that Jesus has a purpose for us. We call that purpose our calling. Our calling is primarily expressed as we discover, develop, and deploy our **Gifts** in our area of **Passion** as we allow Jesus to write our **Story**.

If you put the first letters of those three words together, you see the familiar **GPS** term. GPS is a modern technology that shows you where you are on the planet by triangulating signals from multiple satellites. Our spiritual GPS triangulates the three signals that God emits from Himself.

## Gifts

*God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.*  
1 Peter 4:10

There are many Spiritual gifts listed in the New Testament. While these gifts are a key indicator of the calling Jesus has for our lives, knowing what they are is not enough. God has also given us natural abilities as well as the ability to develop additional skills through education and training.

## Passions

These gifts and abilities tell us **what** activities God will use to most powerfully accomplish His purposes through us, but they do not necessarily share **where** or **how** we will use them. To discover the answers to these questions, we need to discern which primary **passions** God has given to us.

God uses the experiences in our lives to give us purpose for our lives. Through these experiences, God develops within us passions for certain people and causes. What kind of people do you care most about? What causes could you give your energy to? The answers to these questions will help you know **where** to primarily use your gifts.

Another area of our passion is the agenda we bring to the table as we exercise our gifts in our area of passion. We call this our **spiritual influencing style**, which is our way of talking about the five-fold ministry found in Ephesians 4:11, most commonly known as APEST.

### Story

The final question to ask when it comes to our calling is, "what is my next step in developing my calling?" The best way to know your next step is to look back and see your previous steps in the **story** of your life. How has God been developing your calling to date? That will best inform how to proceed.

You can take an online assessment to discover your personal GPS at [gpsnow.church](https://gpsnow.church).

### The Result: The Hope of Glory, or Impact.

We have not been transformed for our benefit only. We have been transformed to share that transformation with others. As we grow in character and calling, Jesus impacts the world around us with His grace and power.

The relative impact of developing character and calling can be seen by doing simple math through our symbol, and that math is very telling.

If a person's character is relatively low, perhaps a 3 on a scale from 1-10, and they have never even heard that Jesus has a calling on their life, perhaps a 1 on a scale from 1-10, then the relative impact they can expect to have is only 3 on a scale of 1-100. Here is the math...

$$\begin{array}{r} 3 \text{ (character)} \\ \times 1 \text{ (calling)} \\ \hline 3 \text{ (Impact)} \end{array}$$

If this person starts to engage with a disciple-making experience that is focused on developing both character and calling, look what happens when their character goes up slightly but their calling takes a quick jump...

$$\begin{array}{r} 4 \text{ (character)} \\ \times 3 \text{ (calling)} \\ \hline 12 \text{ (Impact)} \end{array}$$

As you can see, small steps can lead to significant impact. Impact, in turn, becomes the fuel that inspires more character and calling development. This person, for perhaps the first time in their life, is living on purpose. They want to protect that experience, so they accelerate the pursuit of character development. In turn, God honors that purity with more power through their calling. This changes the math even more...

$$\begin{array}{r} 6 \text{ (character)} \\ \times 5 \text{ (calling)} \\ \hline 30 \text{ (Impact)} \end{array}$$

The Impact has doubled, and so has the fuel for further development. Over time, character and calling increase and God's impact in the world contributes to His coming glory. May character and calling become out language more and more!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Where have you seen God make impact in this world through you the most? How much did that impact relate to growth you took in character? In calling?
- What next step do you need to take to develop your character? Your calling?
- What next step do you need to take to ensure that every disciple-making experience you lead will focus on developing character and calling?

The Impact Equation is a picture, a mirror, and a window.

- Picture to understand: what does the Impact Equation show you about being a disciple of Jesus?
- Mirror to reflect: what does the Impact Equation show you about yourself?
- Window to see: what should you do about what you seen in and through the Impact Equation?

## KEY SCRIPTURES FOR THE IMPACT EQUATION

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*  
John 10:10

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*  
Romans 8: 28-29

*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*  
Galatians 5: 22-25

*If you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.*  
2 Peter 1: 8-9

*We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*  
Ephesians 2:10

*Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.*  
From 1 Corinthians 12

## Discovery Bible Studies for Impact Equation

Galatians 5:16-26

John 15:1-10

Romans 12:1-8

2 Corinthians 5:17-20

### DBS Process (S.O.A.P.)

#### Scripture

- Read the passage
- Have someone put it in their own words

#### Observe

- What stands out to you?
- What does this text say about God?
- What does this text say about people?

#### Apply

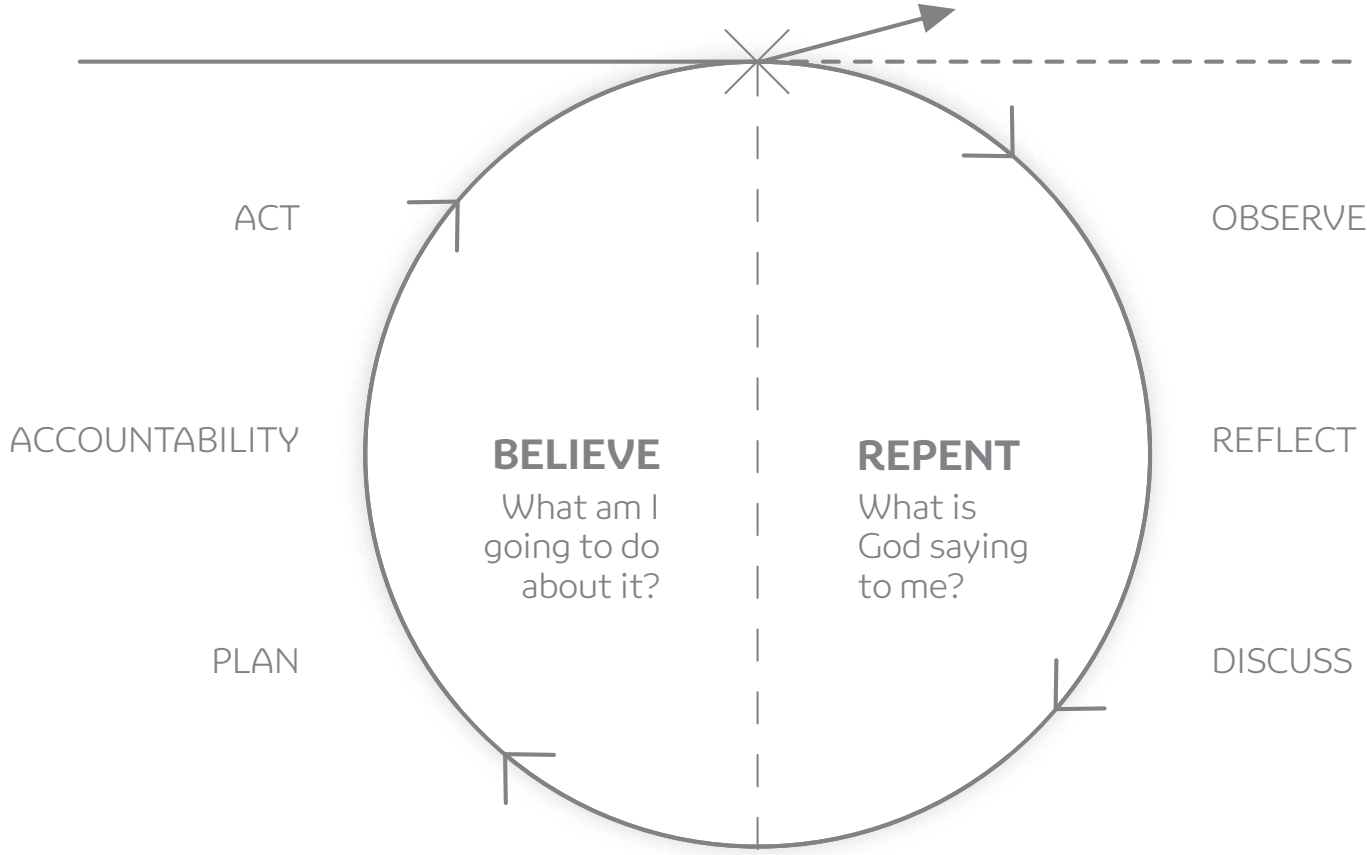
- How can you specifically live out this passage in the next few days? (Everyone creates an 'I WILL' STATEMENT)

#### Person

- Who are you going to tell about what you discovered this week?



# KAIROS CIRCLE Following Jesus in Obedience





## BEST PRACTICES FOR USING THE KAIROS CIRCLE

- Remember this symbol is designed to be three things:

1. **A Picture to understand key ideas regarding disciple-making:**

What does this tell me about being a disciple?

2. **A Mirror to see our reflection in:**

What does this tell me about myself?

3. **A Window to look at all of life through:**

What should I do about it?

- We encourage you to read through the summaries five times before sharing it.

- Journal on the picture, mirror, and window questions above before sharing this. The degree to which you engage this symbol personally, is the degree to which you will be able to lead others into engagement.

- There are two versions included here: A four-minute summary and an extended summary.

- The main points are highlighted in teal in both versions. Commit these to memory.

- Key phrases are highlighted in red in the extended summary of the Kairos Circle. Become fluent with these key phrases. The four-minute summary is comprised of only these key phrases.

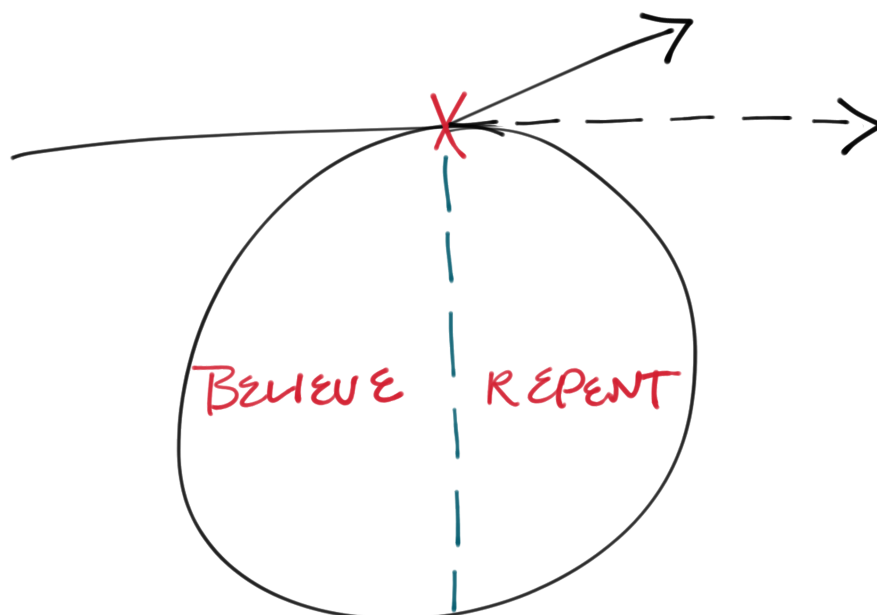
- We encourage you to draw and explain the four-minute summary out loud three times before sharing it with someone else.

- When you share it with someone, draw the Kairos Circle on a napkin or sheet of paper. Leave that drawing with them.

- Remember to read the situation and the spiritual interest of the person you are sharing this with. It may be wisest to just share the brief highlight. Or if the interest is there, use the extended version, making it conversational by using the discussion questions.

- After you share it, encourage the person you've shared it with to share it with another spiritually curious or hungry friend or family member within the next few days. In so doing, you are training every disciple to be a disciple who can make disciples from day one. This builds in reproduction and multiplication as the norm for every disciple.

## KAIROS CIRCLE Following Jesus in Obedience



## A FOUR MINUTE SUMMARY OF THE KAIROS CIRCLE

When we commit to follow Jesus, we are choosing to make Him Lord of every part of our life. That means we need to learn how to hear when He speaks, and become obedient to the new ways in which Jesus leads us. This might sound intimidating; however, we believe that we can learn to recognize where Jesus is speaking to us in the everyday places of life by recognizing *Kairos moments*.

In Mark 1:15, Jesus says, “The time has come, the kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the good news.”

### KAIROS MOMENT

The word that Mark uses for time in this passage is *Kairos*. The other Greek word for time is *Chronos*, where we get our word chronology, indicating a sequence of events. We’re all living on a timeline (*Chronos*). *Kairos*, rather than indicating a sequence of events, indicates a significant event has taken place. It’s an event that causes us to stop and ask some questions. It has some impact on our life. Kairos moments can be positive or negative, great or small: an argument with a spouse, a promotion, a friend moves away, a clean bill of health, an unexpected grade on a test. Kairos moments give us the opportunity to stop and ask, “Is this a place where Jesus wants to speak to me or lead me in a new way?”

### KAIROS CIRCLE

When we recognize we’ve had a *kairos moment*, we can then enter the tool we call the Kairos Circle. This tool helps us process the event, moment, circumstance and discover

what about our life needs to change or adjust to come more in line with the ways of Jesus. Using this tool, we are trying to answer two primary questions: “What is Jesus saying to me?” and “What am I going to do about it?”

### REPENT – What Is Jesus Saying to Me?

In Mark 1:15, Jesus says, “Repent and believe the good news.” The first part, repentance, means that we need a change of mind and heart. The word communicates movement. We were moving in one direction, and now we will move in another direction. In the first half of the circle we **observe** the event, we **reflect** on the event, and we **discuss** with others. At the bottom of the circle we are trying to answer, very specifically, “What is Jesus saying to me?”

### BELIEVE – What am I Going to do About It?

The second half of the circle is “believe.” Like repent, believing indicates movement. Repentance is movement away from something, belief is movement towards a new way. Before continuing around the circle, we must answer the question in response to what we discovered Jesus is saying. We must answer, very specifically, “What am I going to do about it?” Upon arriving at this answer we can now do three more things: Make a **plan**, invite **accountability**, and finally **act**.

When we have moved completely through the Kairos Circle we should come out on a **new trajectory**, living in new and transformed ways that are more in line with the character and ways of Jesus.

# EXTENDED VERSION OF THE KAIROS CIRCLE

## INTRODUCTION: A Disciple of Jesus

The primary word used of Jesus followers in the New Testament is **disciple**. This word disciple indicates that someone is learning from another. Disciples are committing their life to become like the one from whom they are learning. With this understanding, we can recognize and indeed admit that people are being disciplined everyday by something or someone. Most often it is subliminally done by the culture in which we live. We decide on a political party, what is beautiful or not attractive, what is ideal or frowned upon by what we see and who else is doing or believing those things. **Disciples of Jesus should be looking to Jesus as their source for how to live.** This takes intentionality and a willingness to pay attention to every moment in our life as an opportunity to become more like Jesus.

So how do we know what Jesus is saying? Do we know how to recognize his voice and respond to what Jesus is saying? We believe that using the Kairos Circle will help individuals and communities see life differently. This tool will help you take the mundane and the magnificent moments of the everyday life and listen for the voice of Jesus. This is what a disciple of Jesus does. **They see all of life through the ways and character of Jesus and continually seek to reshape their life around his.**

The Kairos Circle is a practical tool that offers a consistent pattern and process for discerning the voice of Jesus in community. Built into both halves of the Kairos Circle is an opportunity to live more deeply and intentionally with others who are seeking to live like Jesus.

So what is a Kairos?

## KAIROS MOMENTS

In Mark 1:15, Jesus says, **"The time has come, the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the good news!"** This is a declaration Jesus is often using within his ministry. He is declaring that with his arrival, a new way of life has entered, the eternal has broken in to the temporal. The day that we are looking forward to when there will be no more disease, no more loneliness, no more hunger, no more wars, no more brokenness, Jesus is ushering that in with his arrival. Jesus is saying, that life is already possible now, though we will not yet see it in its fullness.

There are two Greek words for time, Chronos and Kairos. Chronos indicates time that is moving in a sequence, think **chronology or your watch.** *(Begin your image by drawing a straight line with an arrow at the right end indicating forward movement.)* **Kairos indicates an event, and point on that timeline that is significant.** *(Draw a star at the center point of your timeline indicating a Kairos moment has occurred.)* Every time Jesus gives this declaration of what he is here for, he is saying, "Hey, pay attention, this is big. I'm inviting you into something. I'm inviting you to bring the kingdom with me." As disciples of Jesus, we get to play a part in bringing the Kingdom of God to the kingdoms of this world. We get to help in making this present time look like what it will be one day.

That begins with us adjusting our rhythms and life to match those of Jesus. We do this through obedience to his word and by shaping our character in new ways when he speaks. **Kairos moments are significant events in our life that help us pause and say, "Hey, pay attention. Something is going on here. Jesus may be using this present circumstance or experience to say something to me."**

Kairos moments can really be anything in our life that has that effect of creating a pause within us. The more we pay attention, the more of these we will begin to see in our everyday life. They don't have to be a birth, a death, a marriage or a divorce. They can be very small events as well. They can be internal and personal, they can be external and distanced like a national crisis. Every one of these moments is an opportunity for growth as we are seeking to grow.

## REPENT - What is Jesus trying to say to me?

Jesus says, **"Repent and believe the good news."** This phrase is an invitation to action, not passive observation. When we hear repent, we might think of apologizing or stopping some behavior. **The word in the original language communicates a change of direction, a change of mind and heart.** Repentance is not always easy. It is always necessary in becoming more like Jesus. Repentance is a process, and there are steps to help us arrive at a new destination.

When we have identified a Kairos moment, what are the next steps? At this point, you have a choice. You can either continue on your current trajectory or you can enter into

the Kairos Circle and discover the voice of Jesus. (*Draw the circle with a dotted line through the center of the circle. Write "Repent" inside the right half of the circle.*) **The first step in this learning experience is to observe what has happened.** (*Write "Observe" at the top of the right side of the circle.*) This is often an opportunity for reflection or for journaling. Really spend some time around what you experienced, what you saw, what you believe happened. Before you can make any movement, you need to know where you are, get your bearings and understand what exactly it is you're feeling. Can you write down or communicate to someone the experience or is it still blurry? Continue to spend time in this step until you have some clarity about the Kairos.

**After a period of observation, the next step of the journey is to reflect.** (*Write "Reflect" in the middle of the right side of the circle.*) Reflection in this step is different than what you experienced in the observation piece. Now you are going back and thinking about your filters, who you are, and what has happened in your life up to that point that may have made you see or experience that moment in a particular way. Why is this moment so significant? Is it because of a childhood experience? Is it because you have always adhered to a certain philosophy and now something has shaken that? Ask all the questions you can.

Now that you've done the work of observing and reflecting, it's time to bring in an outside voice. **The final step in the repentance half of the Kairos Circle is to discuss.** (*Write "Discuss" at the bottom of the right side of the circle.*) Discuss the experience with a trusted friend, someone who knows you, who knows your filters and the way you see the world and ask them to help you discern why this may have been an important moment in your life. Remember, we weren't made for isolation. We're built for community. External voices often bring a sense of clarity and help expose our self-bias or blind spots.

After thoroughly working through the process of observation, reflection and discussion, we're ready to make an attempt at answer this question, **"Jesus, what are you trying to say to me?"** (*Write out this question on the right side of the circle.*) If you can't answer this question with clarity and some specificity, go back and work through those steps again. Not every Kairos moment is intended to take three minutes to process. Sometimes, we may go through a season of discovering the answer to the repentance piece. Sometimes we will arrive at an answer in a matter of moments.

**Clarity and specificity are important.** If our answer is something vague like, "I should love people more," we won't be able to act in very specific ways. The more specific we can be in this moment, the more focused we can be with our actions. If a Kairos moment has happened around a conversation with your spouse where they have communicated they feel lonely, and you have really worked through the repentance piece with yourself and with a trusted friend(s), your answer might be, "Jesus is trying to tell me that I'm over-committed to my career and not setting healthy boundaries to be present at home." This type of answer will help you determine what you need to do next. It's clear and specific and we can easily add some measurable outcomes.

### **BELIEVE – What am I going to do about it?**

**Jesus is not just asking for movement away from something. He is also asking for movement towards something new.** (*Write "Believe" inside the left half of the circle.*) When Jesus says, "Believe in the good news," he is inviting us to act in faith towards a new direction. Before ascending the left side of the Kairos Circle, we need to answer the second important question: **"What am I going to do about it?"** (*Write this question on the left side of the circle.*) For many Christians, we get stuck at the bottom of the circle. It's far easier to think about doing something than to actually take steps. The truth is, if we have actually taken the time to go through the process of repentance and have genuinely changed directions, new actions are the natural result. They are expected outcomes.

Again, as with the previous question, we need specificity and clarity. Once more, if our answer is vague or unclear, we will not be able to create a plan that we can follow through on and we will probably not make much change.

Once you have answered the question, "What am I going to do about it?" we now have three new steps to help us exit the Kairos Circle on a new trajectory. **The first step is to make a plan.** (*Write "Plan" at the bottom of the left half of the circle.*) If the answer to our question was, "I'm going to limit my work hours and leave my electronic devices at the office," then we can make some specific plans to go along with that. How will we limit those hours? Do we need to have a conversation with our boss? Are there certain tasks that can be eliminated from our day? Ask better questions that will help you formulate a plan to help you take actual next steps.

We've all made commitments that have lacked any follow up. Mostly this is driven by a lack of accountability. In order to take steps and see actual change, **we need to share our decisions with at least one trusted friend who will hold us accountable.** (Write "Account" or "Accountable" at the middle of the left half of the circle.) Remember, we haven't made these decisions just because we think they are good ideas. We've made these decisions because we believe Jesus is calling us to live in new ways. Here again, we see the value and need for developed community. It is in trusted relationships that other believers can ask us the hard questions and hold us accountable to movement and becoming more and more like Jesus.

**The final step of the journey is to act.** (Write "Act" at the top of the left half of the circle.) This is often the most difficult part. However, it is now that we are empowered to act out of our new beliefs that are being shaped by Jesus. As we exit out of the Kairos Circle, we should come out on a new trajectory. (Draw an arrow slightly up and to the right of the original line you drew to indicate the timeline we are on. This will represent the new trajectory we can live on each time we exit a Kairos circle.) **The distance from the old path we were on and the new path we're taking represents our growth in becoming more like Jesus.**

As we grow in maturity and awareness of the voice of Jesus, we will not always need to work through every individual step of the Kairos Circle. Remember that sometimes we can work the process in a matter of moments. Sometimes it may take days, weeks or longer before we arrive at the best answer. The purpose of this discipleship tool is to continually be in movement towards developing our character around the character of Jesus.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Do you feel that you consistently listen for the voice of Jesus? Do you recognize when he is trying to speak to you?
- In the past, when you were attempting to discern the voice of Jesus leading you, what did you do to discover what he might be saying?
- What part of the Kairos circle feels like it will be most challenging for you to practice consistently?
- Can you identify a moment recently that may have been a Kairos moment?
- The Kairos circle is a picture, a mirror, and a window.
  - Picture to understand: what does the Kairos Circle show you about being a disciple of Jesus?
  - Mirror to reflect: what does the Kairos Circle show you about yourself?
  - Window to see: what should you do about what you seen in and through the Kairos Circle?

## KEY SCRIPTURES FOR THE KAIROS CIRCLE

Mark 1:15

*Jesus said, "the time is at hand, the kingdom of god is near, repent and believe the good news."*

The Epileptic | Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29

- The epileptic seizure | Kairos
- "...unbelieving and perverse generation!" | Observe, Reflect
- Lord, why couldn't we drive it out? | Discuss
- This kind can only come out by prayer | Plan
- Mustard seed principle | Accountability, Act

Forgiving Wrongs | Matthew 18:15-20; Matthew 18:21-35

- A wrong is done, a resentment remembered | Kairos
- If your brother sins, go to him | Observe, Reflect
- Lord, how many times? | Discuss
- Therefore, forgive your brother from the heart | Plan, Accountability, Act

A Mother's Request for Status | Matthew 20:20-28

- Coming to Jesus with a request | Kairos
- When other disciples hear this, they are indignant | Observe, Reflect
- Jesus calls them together for teaching and discussion | Discuss
- Not so with you! | Plan
- Whoever wants to be first must be a slave to all | Accountability, Act

The Rich Young Man | Matthew 19:16-29

- Conversation | Kairos
- When the disciples hear, they are astonished | Observe, Reflect
- Who can be saved | Reflect
- We left everything; what will there be for us | Discuss
- If you leave houses, family, fields | Plan, Accountability, Act

## Discovery Bible Studies for the Kairos Circle

Luke 7:37-50

Luke 15:11-32

Luke 18:9-14

Luke 19:1-10

1 John 1:5-2:6

### DBS Process (S.O.A.P.)

#### Scripture

- Read the passage
- Have someone put it in their own words

#### Observe

- What stands out to you?
- What does this text say about God?
- What does this text say about people?

#### Apply

- How can you specifically live out this passage in the next few days? (Everyone creates an 'I WILL' STATEMENT)

#### Person

- Who are you going to tell about what you discovered this week?

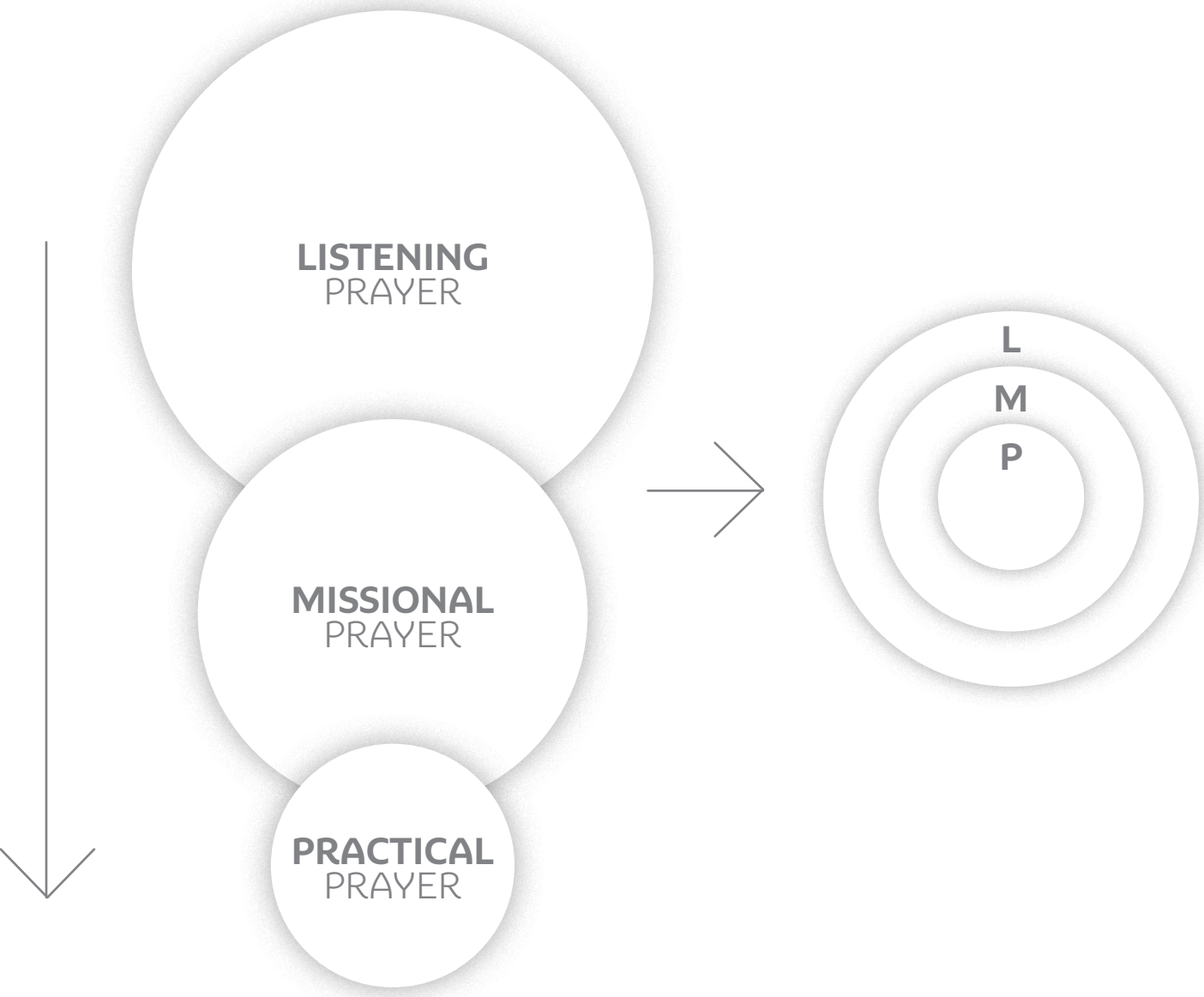
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\*The Kairos Circle has been adapted from The Learning Circle, which can be found in Mike Breen and Steve Cockram's book, Building a Discipling Culture. The examples from Scripture can be found in that same work on pages 76-77. This tool is foundational in teaching people how to hear from Jesus and then respond in obedience. We are grateful for the influencing work of 3DM.





**PRAYER CIRCLES** Following Jesus in Prayer



## BEST PRACTICES FOR USING THE PRAYER CIRCLES

- Remember this symbol is designed to be three things:

1. **A Picture to understand key ideas regarding disciple-making:**  
What does this tell me about being a disciple?

2. **A Mirror to see our reflection in:**  
What does this tell me about myself?

3. **A Window to look at all of life through:**  
What should I do about it?

- We encourage you to read through the summaries five times before sharing it.

- Journal on the picture, mirror, and window questions above before sharing this. The degree to which you engage this symbol personally, is the degree to which you will be able to lead others into engagement.

- There are two versions included here: A four-minute summary and an extended summary.

- The main points are highlighted in teal in both versions. Commit these to memory.

- Key phrases are highlighted in red in the extended summary of the Prayer Circles. Become fluent with these key phrases. The four-minute summary is comprised of only these key phrases.

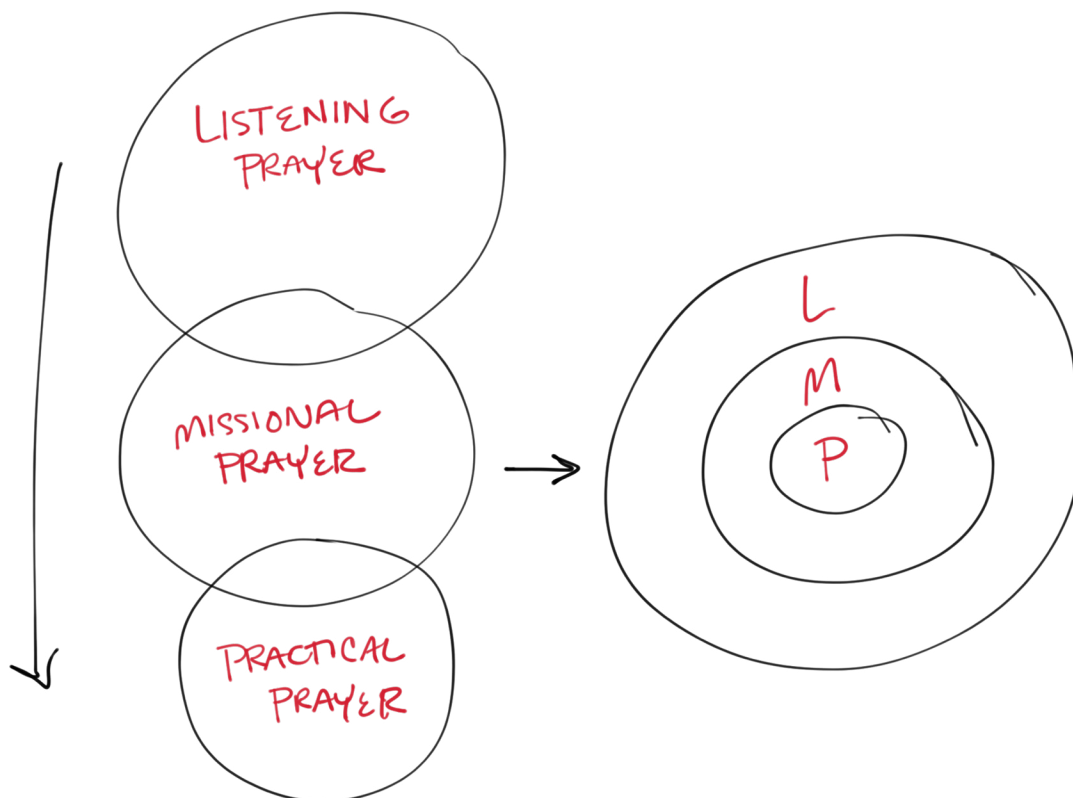
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## PRAYER CIRCLES Following Jesus in Prayer



## FOUR MINUTE SUMMARY OF THE PRAYER CIRCLES

### Introduction Move #1: Almost Everyone Prays

Almost everyone prays. Overall, 9 in 10 Americans claim to engage in prayer, most on a daily basis. Scientists have studied prayer. Those who pray 30 minutes a day have lower blood pressure, reduced stress, and better focus. They report feeling more powerfully connected to God and experience him directly. What if we could experience more of the benefit of prayer and less “bounce-back” from the ceiling? Would you be interested?

### Introduction Move #2: Jesus Gives a Better Way to Pray

*As disciples, we decide to follow Jesus in Prayer. Jesus' way of prayer will lead us into the deepest benefits of prayer.* One time his disciples asked him, “Can you teach us how to pray?” (Luke 11:1). Jesus introduced us to what is now called the Lord’s Prayer. In that prayer, He introduces us to a pattern for prayer that we can use as a guide. We call these the prayer circles. Jesus wants prayer to encircle all our entire life with his peace, provision, and a sense of His presence. How do we engage prayer in the same way Jesus did? The Prayer Circles.

***This, then, is how you should pray:***

***“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,”***

Matthew 6:9

### Circle #1: Listening Prayer

When we begin in prayer, Jesus tells us to start with both a sense of rest, “My Father,” and also respect, “Hallowed be your name.” Without a doubt, if respect is owed to the office of the President, how much more to our Creator, the King of the Entire Cosmos? Jesus says, “Bring respect to your prayer.” But he also says, “You can rest in prayer.” Why? The first thing Jesus reminds us of is that God is Our Father. He is our perfect Dad, so we can find perfect rest and relax in His presence because Jesus, through His life, death, and resurrection, made a way for us to know we are God’s beloved children. In the listening circle, we come with a profound sense of respect and rest, ready to listen. Most of us don’t associate prayer with listening, only talking. But, prayer isn’t just a monologue, it’s a dialogue. God speaks to us through His Word and His Spirit. Jesus said, “My sheep listen to my voice” (John 10:27). All through the Story, we see the Spirit giving very specific instructions through prayer. When we begin in prayer, we start by breathing in, through a listening type of prayer.

**Ask and Listen: Father, how are you already at work in me and around me where I live, work, study, and play?**

From there, Jesus proceeds with two types of breathing out prayer found within the next phrases of the Lord’s prayer.

***“...your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”*** Matthew 6:10

### Circle two: Missional Prayer

“Kingdom Come” is an invitation to step back, lift our eyes, and remember Jesus has a mission in this world and nothing matters more. What does this Kingdom mission look like? In Matthew 19:28 Jesus describes it with five words, “*The renewal of all things.*” Everything broken made whole. Everything shattered restored, the ultimate extreme makeover project and we are invited. Jesus said the Kingdom of God is the place on earth where heaven is breaking through. That begins in our hearts. That continues where we live, work, study, and play. It ultimately includes the whole world. If the key words in the listening circle are *respect* and *rest*, the key words in the missional circle are *surrender* and *serve*. First, we surrender to His will, His mission. In later parts of the Lord’s prayer, we will see our need to surrender our own faults and also our grudges against others (Matthew 6: 12). We will need to surrender to our powerlessness and ask for His power to deliver us from temptation and demonic evil (Matthew 6:13). As we surrender all of our life, then, we also look for how we can serve His will and His mission around us. Here’s a simple question to begin with...

**Ask and Listen: Father, how can I join you?**

That will naturally lead to the next type of breathing out prayer, the third prayer circle. Jesus teaches us to pray,

***“Give us today our daily bread.”*** Matthew 6:11

### Circle #3: Practical Prayer

Every day, Jesus cares about our daily bread. He wants to know about our practical needs daily. Prayer takes us beyond merely human effort producing merely human results. Still prayer is not first about getting something; prayer is first about getting Someone. Ultimately, prayer is communing with Jesus. If we have Him, we have the Source for all we need. Asking for practical needs keeps us motivated to come back to Him daily. Also, notice Jesus doesn't say, "Give ME today MY daily bread." It's a communal prayer, "Give US today OUR daily bread." As I get a sense of where God is at work in others, as I join him, I have the amazing opportunity to pray with and for people by name. Start with these simple questions.

**Ask and Listen: Father, here are my needs, how can I trust you?**

**Ask and Listen: Neighbor, how can I pray for you?**

### Prayer Flow and Overlapping Circles

Let me ask you, if we were to survey the prayer life of the average person, including even devoted people, which one

of these types of prayer do you think probably receives the most airtime? If you had to represent it by the size of the circles, how would you draw each circle?

Without a doubt, in my experience, PRACTICAL prayer is 80-100% of our prayer time. Yet, in the pattern Jesus gives us for prayer, the two other circles of prayer take priority. Listening Prayer and Missional Prayer, make up 80% or more of the pattern Jesus gave to us.

The goal is for our listening prayer to inform our missional prayer which will inform our practical prayer. There is a flow from listening to missional to practical prayer. When we get in that flow, we experience the deepest benefits of prayer.

We don't need to see these as competing that circles, but complimentary circles and eventually, as concentric circles, that completely overlap each other. That's what the Bible calls "pray(er) without ceasing," where we are communing with Jesus in a conversation that never ends. Our whole life is encircled in prayer.

What stood out to you about your prayer life?  
Now, who can you share this with this week?

## EXTENDED VERSION OF THE PRAYER CIRCLES

### Introduction move #1: Almost everyone prays.

Almost everyone prays. Overall, 9 in 10 Americans claim to engage in prayer, a proportion that has not changed over the last half-century. 3 out of 4 Americans say that they pray on a daily basis. Why do people pray? The survey results indicate that people pray for a range of reasons -- from asking for their family's wellbeing, to adoration of God, to winning the lottery. I know a few "lottery" prayers over the years! Scientists have studied prayer. Those who pray 30 minutes a day have lower blood pressure, reduced stress, and better focus. They report feeling more powerfully connected to God and experience him directly.

#### What has your experience with prayer been like?

*(Discuss)*

Mine has been mixed. At times, I've felt connected and strengthened. Other times, it feels like the prayers are bouncing off the ceiling. What if we could experience more of the benefit of prayer and less of the "bounce-back" from the ceiling? Would you be interested?

### Introduction move #2: Jesus has a better way of prayer.

As disciples, we decide to follow Jesus in Prayer. Jesus' way of prayer will lead us into the deepest benefits of prayer. One time his disciples asked him, "We have no clue what we're doing when we pray. Can you teach us how to pray?" (Luke 11:1)

Jesus introduced us to what is now called the Lord's Prayer. In that prayer, Jesus introduces us to a pattern for prayer that we can use as a guide. We call these the prayer circles. Jesus wants prayer to encircle all our entire life with his peace, provision, and a sense of His presence. How do we engage prayer in the same way Jesus did? The Prayer Circles.

This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."

Matthew 6:9

**Circle #1: Listening Prayer.** *(Draw the first circle and write "Listening" in it.)*

Hallowed means to reverence, to respect, and to honor.

When we begin in prayer, Jesus tells us, to start with both a sense of rest, "My Father," and also respect, "Hallowed be your name." He's asking us to hold two of these together: rest and respect. *(Write the words respect, rest, and ready in the circle or by the circle)*

Let's talk about respect or reverence. If I were to have the privilege to come into the presence of a great King or the President; I would not begin by talking their ear off. I would remember, "Do not speak until spoken to." I would take a posture of listening and a posture of respect. Without a doubt, if respect is owed to the office of President, how much more to our Creator, the King of the Entire Cosmos? Jesus says, "Bring respect to your prayer."

But he also says, "You can rest and relax in prayer." How so? The first thing Jesus reminds us of is that God is Our Father. He is our perfect Dad, so we can find perfect rest and relax in His presence because Jesus, through His life, death, and resurrection, made a way for us to know we are God's beloved children. Jesus has removed all the shame and carried the judgment of sin for us, so we can be completely at rest in God's presence. Jesus even teaches us to call God our Abba. The word, Abba, in Jesus' culture was a particularly affectionate term for Father, the equivalent of Daddy or Papa in our day. We've all experienced broken earthly Fathers, but Jesus reveals to us the God who is the perfect Dad, in whose presence we can finally and fully rest.

In the listening circle, we come with a profound sense of respect and rest, ready to listen.

Most of us don't associate prayer with listening, only talking. But prayer isn't just a monologue, it's a dialogue. God speaks to us through His Word and His Spirit. Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice (John 10:27)." All through the Story, we see the Spirit giving very specific instructions through prayer. It says of Jesus that, "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed (Luke 5:16)." What was Jesus doing in those lonely places? He was listening to His Father. He would come out of those prayer times and say things like, "I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me," (John 8:28)." Or, Jesus said, "For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given...what to say and what to speak." (John 12:29). Jesus calls us into the same listening posture to

His voice. Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice," (John 10:27). All through the Story, we see the Spirit giving very specific instructions through prayer. One time, He even gave a disciple named Ananias the address he was to walk to (Acts 9:10-11)! The prophet told us that when the Spirit comes, He will guide us step by step, "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it (Isaiah 30:21)." Of course, we test what we "hear" through the Word of God and the counsel of our spiritual family so we don't get lost in our own inner chatter and mixed motives (1 John 4:1-6).

**What do you think about listening prayer? How have you heard the God influencing you in the past?** *(Discuss)*

**Share a personal story from your life on listening prayer guiding you.** That's listening prayer. With each of these circles we will give you a question or two to begin with in prayer. **When we begin in prayer, we start by breathing in, through a listening type of prayer.**

**Ask and Listen: Father, how are you already at work in me and around me where I live, work, study, and play?**

Ask the Lord each day, first thing in the morning and before you go to bed, "Where are you at work in me?" Then, breathe in, and listen." As you drive into work ask, "Father how are you already at work in my workplace?" Then, breathe in, and listen. In the evening, as you walk the dog or go to get the mail, ask, "Father, how are you already at work in my neighborhood?" Then, breathe in, and listen. When you head to your kid's ball game ask, "Father, how are you already at work in the lives of these kids and their parents?" Then, breathe in, and listen. If you start with little bursts of listening at first, maybe a minute or two, eventually, over time, you'll find the amount of time you spend listening in prayer growing. We'll talk about that a little later, but first let's look at the next two prayer circles.

From listening prayer, Jesus proceeds with two types of breathing out prayer found within the next phrases of the Lord's prayer.

"...your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10

**Circle two: Missional Prayer** *(Draw a second circle below the first circle, overlapping on the bottom. Write "missional" in the circle.)*

"Kingdom Come" is an invitation to step back, lift our eyes, and remember Jesus has a mission in this world and nothing matters more. We have this unbelievable privilege of attaching our lives to Him and His mission. What does this Kingdom mission look like? In Matthew 19:28 Jesus describes it with five words, "The renewal of all things." Everything broken made whole. Everything shattered restored. The ultimate extreme makeover project and we are invited.

Jesus said the Kingdom of God is the place on earth where heaven is breaking through. That begins in our hearts. That starts where we live, work, study, and play. It continues to include the whole world. If the key words in the listening circle are respect and rest, the key words in the missional circle are **surrender and serve**. *(Write "surrender" and "serve" in or around the second circle.)*

**First, we surrender to His will, His mission.** In later parts of the Lord's prayer, we will see we need to surrender our own faults and also our grudges against others (Matthew 6: 12). We will need to surrender to our powerlessness and ask for His power to deliver us from temptation and demonic evil (Matthew 6:13). **His mission is our life. As we surrender all of our life, then, we also look for how we can serve His will and His mission around us.**

Here's a simple question to begin with...

**Ask and Listen: Father, how can I join you?**

When I listen, He will speak. His voice will guide me. I'll start noticing things I didn't notice before that I need to surrender in my heart. I will decide to trust Him and choose His way over mine. I will also start to notice ways to serve around me. Opportunities and conversations will emerge that have a light bulb over it. Then, I start praying, "Father how can I join you in what you are doing in me and around me?"

That will naturally lead to the next type of breathing out prayer, the third prayer circle. Jesus teaches us to pray,

"Give us today our daily bread." Matthew 6:11

**Circle #3: Practical Prayer** *(Draw the third circle overlapping below the second. Write "practical" in it.)*

**Every day, Jesus cares about our daily bread. He wants to know about our practical needs daily.** *(Write the word*



"needs" in or around the circle). **Prayer takes us beyond merely human effort producing merely human results.** The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results (James 5:17). When we pray, it releases a new Kingdom energy into situations and lives that only Jesus can bring. **Still prayer is not first about getting something; Prayer is first about getting Someone.** Ultimately, prayer is communing with Jesus. If we have Him, we have the Source for all we need. Asking for practical needs keeps us motivated to come back to Him daily.

Also, notice Jesus doesn't say, "Give ME today MY daily bread." It's a communal prayer, "Give US today OUR daily bread." As I get a sense of where God is at work in others, as I join him, I have the amazing opportunity to prayer with and for people by name. Start by praying for your neighbors and co-workers by name. (Write the word "neighbor" in or around the circle.) You'll be amazed at what happens in your heart as you do.

**Ask and Listen: Father, here are my needs, how can I trust you?**

**Ask and Listen: Neighbor, how can I pray for you?**

Also, start asking permission to pray for specific requests for your neighbors and coworkers. This is a tangible way to show your love. It also creates an opportunity for them to experience the grace and power of God directly.

**Insert a personal story of answered prayer here.** (An example: One of our neighbors was pregnant for the first time. Michelle and I were just a couple years ahead of them, so this gave us plenty to talk about over the fence. One evening, our neighbor opened up about some complications that were happening with the pregnancy that were life-threatening to the baby. I knew that was a precious gift, to open up and share that burden with us. So, I asked them, "I'd like to pray for you and your baby. Can I do that now?" We prayed. I told her, we will continue to pray. A few days later, I was getting out of my car, she came flying across the yard like a bullet. She said, "I don't know what to say! The doctor said everything looks normal now. I had to let you know. It worked!" That was a catalytic moment for them. Within a few months, they were following Jesus in our church family.) The Bible says the gospel is accompanied by signs and wonders, but so often, we don't see them because we're not praying for these miracles in the context of mission and advancing the gospel. Even if the prayers aren't answered in the way

we ask, we can be confident that God is going to answer that prayer in the way that is most helpful in drawing that person to Himself.

**What are the some of your practical needs right now that are weighing you down?** (Discuss)

**Let's give those to God in prayer right now. Pray together.**

Here are the three circles and the questions:

Listening prayer:

Listen and ask, "Father, where are you already at work in me and around me where I live, work, study, and play?"

Missional Prayer:

Listen and ask, "Father, how can I join you?"

Practical Prayer:

Listen and ask, "Father, here are my needs, how can I trust you with this?"

Listen and ask, "Neighbor, how can I pray you?"

### Prayer flow and overlapping circles

Let me ask you, if we were to survey the average prayer life of the average person, including even devoted praying people, which one of these types of prayer do you think probably receives the most airtime? If you have to represent it by the size of the circles, how would you draw it?

(Allow the person to draw the circle sizes. Discuss)

**Without a doubt, in my experience, PRACTICAL prayer gets 80-100% of our prayer time. Yet, in the pattern Jesus gives us for prayer, the two other circles of prayer take priority. Listening Prayer and Missional Prayer, make up 80% or more of the pattern Jesus gave to us.**

(Draw an arrow pointing down alongside the prayer circles).

**The goal is that our listening prayer will inform our missional prayer which will inform our practical prayer. There's is a flow from listening to missional to practical prayer. When we get in that flow, we experience the deepest benefits of prayer.**

Eventually, we won't see these as competing that circles, but complimentary circles and concentric circles, that completely overlap each other. (Draw the three circles like concentric circles of a bullseye with a "L" in the first circle, an "M" in the second, and a "P" in the third.) **That's what the Bible calls "prayer without ceasing," where we are communing with Jesus in a conversation that never ends. Our whole life is encircled in prayer.**



**"...A bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!'" (Matthew 17:5)**

"Listen to Him!" The Father said, as the disciples stood in awe and respect. Jesus was transfigured and the two great figures of the Old Testament – Moses, who read the Law to the people of God, and Elijah, who spoke God's Word to Israel – were talking with him. Moses and Elijah were marvelous, but the Father wanted Peter, James and John to focus their attention on and LISTEN to another: Jesus.

Listen to Him! Fundamentally, discipleship is not just about literacy or fluency but attentiveness – listening to the voice of Jesus and following His Mission. In other words, a follower of Jesus must first be a listener to Jesus.

**We begin in prayer by listening:**

"Hallowed be your name,"

Where are you at work in me?

Where are you at work where I live, work, and play?"

**Then, we move to a missional prayer:**

"Let your kingdom come and your will be done,"

Father, how can I join You?

**And then, we move to practical prayer:**

"Give us today our daily bread,"

Father, here are my needs?

Neighbor, how can I pray for you?

**What stood out to you about your prayer life?**

**Now, who can you share this with this week?**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What has your experience been like in prayer? Pick a few words to describe it. Explain.
- What are the benefits of prayer? What are the challenges?
- Read the Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6:9-13. What are the three types of prayer we discover there through the Prayer Circles? Briefly describe each kind of prayer.
- What do you think about listening prayer? How have you heard the God influencing you in the past?
- How formative was listening prayer in the life of Jesus? How about other followers of God in the Scriptures? Explain your answer.
- On a continuum, with 1 being "Not picking up the signal," and 10 being "I can hear loud and clear," where are you when it comes to hearing through listening prayer? Explain.
- What were the key words when it comes to the attitude we bring to listening prayer? (Respect, Rest and Ready to Listen). Which of these is easiest for you? Which is most difficult?
- What is the key question of Listening Prayer? ("Father where are you at work in me and around me, where I live, work, study, or play?") Where do you see God at work in your heart? Where do you see God at work in your neighborhood or network?
- Missional prayer is driven by Jesus' mission, "Kingdom Come." He summarized that mission this way in Matthew 28:19, "The restoration of all things." How does that strike you? What response does that draw from you?
- The Kingdom is also the place where God's will is "done on earth as it is in Heaven." What would that look like in your neighborhood or network? Dream! Describe it.
- What were the key words to describe the attitude of Missional Prayer? (Surrender and Serve) Which of these is easiest for you? Which is most difficult? Why? How can you grow in that?
- What is the key question for Missional Prayer? (Father, how can I join you?) How can you join where God is at work in you? How can you join where God is at work in your neighborhood or network?

- Practical prayer is initiated by Jesus invitation for us to ask for our daily bread. What are some practical needs that are weighing on you right now? How can we best pray about that?
- What were the key words to describe Practical Prayer? (Needs and Neighbors) How consistently are you praying for your or with your neighbors? What is one step you can take? Check out [www.blesseveryhome.com](http://www.blesseveryhome.com) as a helpful tool to begin praying for neighbors by name.
- What is the current distribution of your prayer life between the three circles? How would you like that to change? What is one step you can take toward that this week?
- How is your daily communing with Jesus going? Do you live interacting with Jesus regularly? Or is it more sporadic? Rare? What's your next step to increase spending an ordinary day aware of and responding to Jesus?
  - Picture to understand: What do the prayer circles show you about being a disciple of Jesus?
  - Mirror to reflect: What do the prayer circles show you about yourself?
  - Window to see: What should you do about what you seen in and through the prayer circles?

## KEY SCRIPTURES FOR THE PRAYER CIRCLES

Matthew 6:9-13  
 John 10:27  
 Luke 5:16  
 John 8:28  
 John 12:29  
 John 10:27  
 Acts 9:10-19  
 Isaiah 30:21  
 1 John 4:1-6  
 Matthew 19:28  
 James 5:15-16  
 Matthew 17:1-8

## Discovery Bible Studies for the Prayer Circles

Matthew 6:9-13

Acts 9:10-19 (listening)

Acts 4:23-31 (missional)

Psalms 86 (practical)

Ephesians 3:14-21

### DBS Process (S.O.A.P.)

#### Scripture

- Read the passage
- Have someone put it in their own words

#### Observe

- What stands out to you?
- What does this text say about God?
- What does this text say about people?

#### Apply

- How can you specifically live out this passage in the next few days? (Everyone creates an 'I WILL' STATEMENT)

#### Person

- Who are you going to tell about what you discovered this week?

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I <http://news.gallup.com/poll/3874/nation-observes-national-day-prayer-pray-daily.aspx>

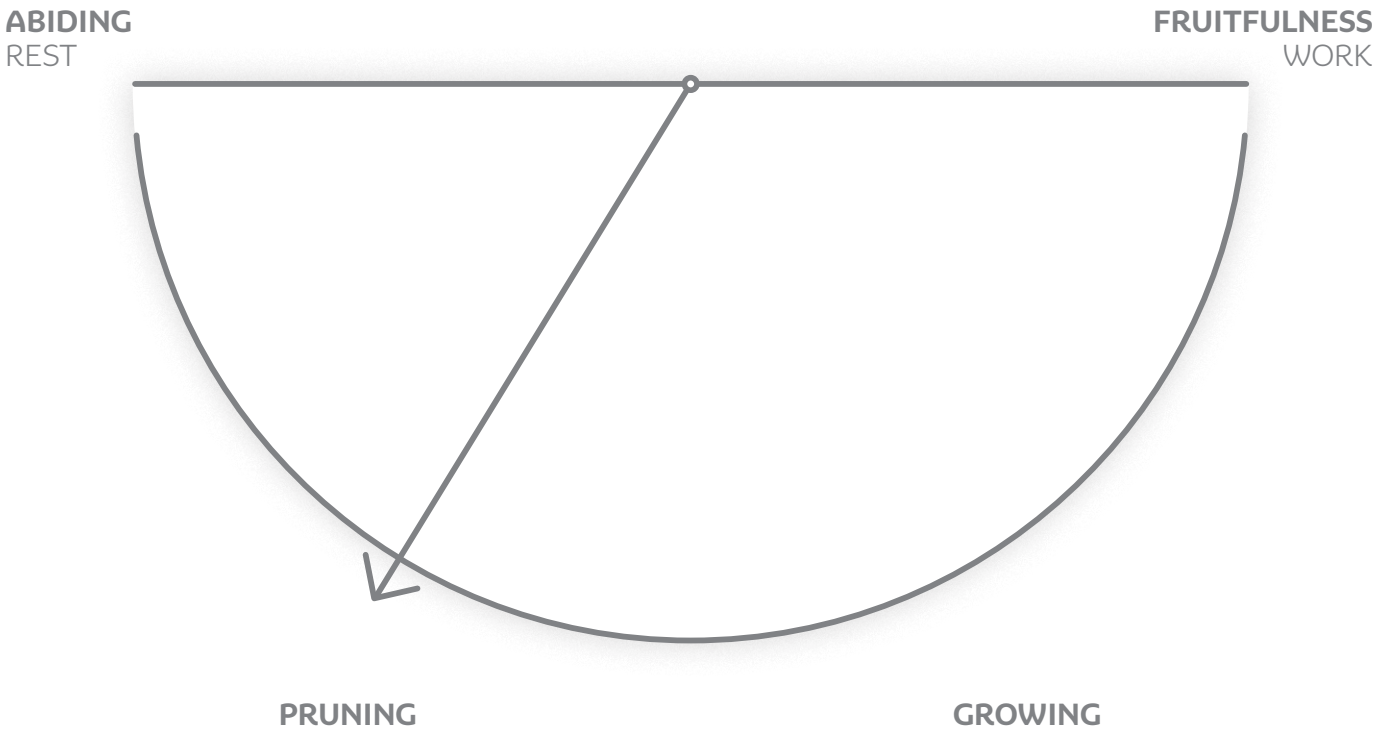
II <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/more-mortal/201603/science-reveals-the-benefits-prayer>

III <http://news.gallup.com/poll/3874/nation-observes-national-day-prayer-pray-daily.aspx>

IV <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/more-mortal/201603/science-reveals-the-benefits-prayer>



# SEMI CIRCLE Following Jesus in Rest



## BEST PRACTICES FOR USING THE SEMI CIRCLE

- Remember this symbol is designed to be three things:

1. **A Picture to understand key ideas regarding disciple-making:**

What does this tell me about being a disciple?

2. **A Mirror to see our reflection in:**

What does this tell me about myself?

3. **A Window to look at all of life through:**

What should I do about it?

- We encourage you to read through the summaries five times before sharing it.

- Journal on the picture, mirror, and window questions above before sharing this. The degree to which you engage this symbol personally, is the degree to which you will be able to lead others into engagement.

- There are two versions included here: A four-minute summary and an extended summary.

- The main points are highlighted in teal in both versions. Commit these to memory.

- Key phrases are highlighted in red in the extended summary of the Semi Circle. Become fluent with these key phrases. The four-minute summary is comprised of only these key phrases.

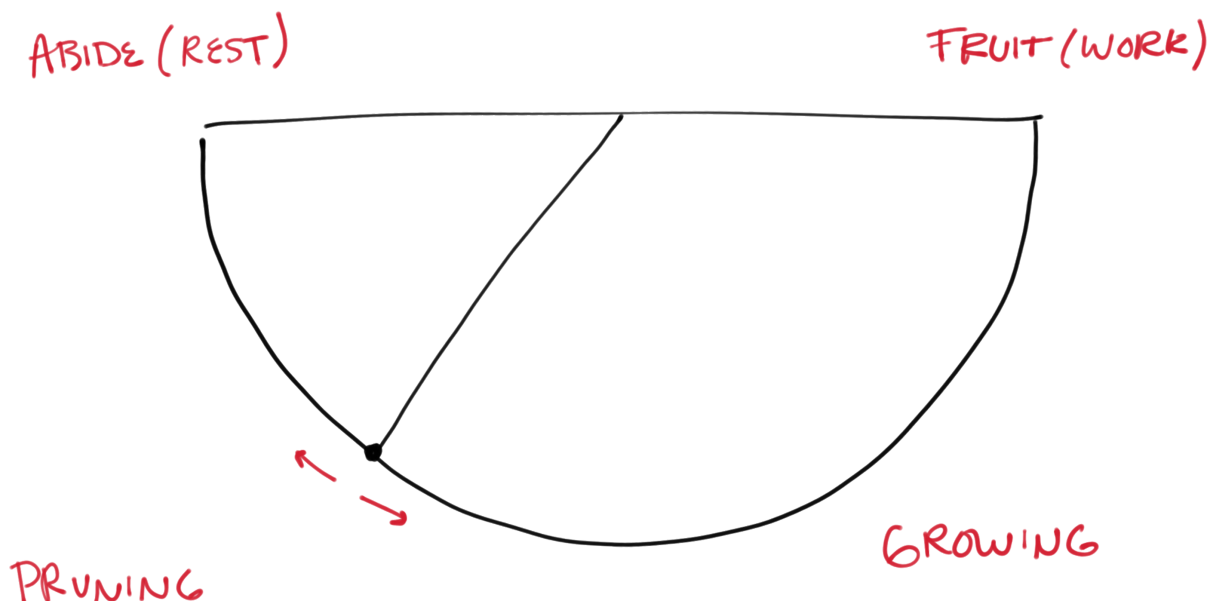
- We encourage you to draw and explain the four-minute summary out loud three times before sharing it with someone else.

- When you share it with someone, draw the Semi Circle on a napkin or sheet of paper. Leave that drawing with them.

- Remember to read the situation and the spiritual interest of the person you are sharing this with. It may be wisest to just share the brief highlight. Or if the interest is there, use the extended version, making it conversational by using the discussion questions.

- After you share it, encourage the person you've shared it with to share it with another spiritually curious or hungry friend or family member within the next few days. In so doing, you are training every disciple to be a disciple who can make disciples from day one. This builds in reproduction and multiplication as the norm for every disciple.

## SEMI CIRCLE Following Jesus in Rest



## A FOUR MINUTE SUMMARY OF THE SEMI CIRCLE

Many of us either have or have had a point in our life where we've been over worked or completely stressed out. Stress has even been called the number one health problem. We live overcrowded lives and we're doing our best to cram as much as possible into every day. Vacation is often an afterthought.

Why do we live this way? Why do we do this to ourselves? Mostly it's because we're driven by a culture that says our identity is in our work. How much can you produce? Now, that desire to do more is not inherently bad. The first command we're given in Scripture is to be fruitful and multiply. But when we wrap our identity in what we produce, we're sure to take it sideways or too far. Our souls get out of balance and we're never satisfied with what we achieve. Jesus shows us a better way by living a life that is balanced in healthy rhythms of rest and work.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. If you abide in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

### RHYTHMS/IMAGE

In the beginning, God created rhythms: morning and evening, breathing in and out, the seasons, rest and work. They are all part of the order that he created out of the chaos. It's not daylight all the time. No one just breathes in. We were not made only for work or only for rest. In fact, Genesis tells us that we were made in His image. The idea was that we were made like our creator. Part of His makeup is built in rest. Our Creator demonstrates that part of our natural order is to rest. The unique design for humanity is that our first full day of life is a day of rest. Adam and Eve were created on the sixth day. Then they enjoyed a day of rest with God on the seventh. On the eighth day they worked. Rather than giving us a picture of tireless work and being rewarded with a break, Genesis shows us that we should work from a place of rest.

### REST/ABIDE/BURNOUT

Burnout is often the place we discover how much we need healthier lifestyles and rhythms of rest. It's the unhealthy side of rest we arrive at when we're not consistently practicing regular rest. Jesus says in John 15, "If you abide in me, you will bear much fruit..." Jesus is saying that we need to follow in his ways. Regularly, he would retreat to be alone with the Father, to be with and abide with him. In abiding, our identity is grounded in him and we discover our mission/calling.

### GROWING/PRUNING

We can be encouraged that our growth is not dependent on our working, but on the accomplished work of Jesus. Jesus says that apart from him, we can do nothing. We will often go through seasons of growth before seeing fruit. We must not confuse the two. He also promises to prune us. These seasons are never easy, but always necessary. No plant cuts its undergrowth back. However, in order to be healthy, we will often experience seasons where we cut back unhealthy or unproductive places in our lives in order to re-center and begin growing in order to produce fruit again.

### WORK/BEAR FRUIT/STRIVING

Out of a place of abiding or resting with the Jesus, we can bear fruit as we were intended to do. Jesus promises that when we abide with him, we will bear much fruit, but apart from him, we can do nothing. The passage is communicating that Jesus bears fruit in and through us. We do not have to work harder or do more. Jesus does the work. When we try to step in and attempt to manufacture or sustain growth, we often end up in a place of striving. The rhythm is driven by the pendulum swing. Eventually, on the opposite side of striving comes an equal and opposite reaction of burnout.

## EXTENDED VERSION OF THE SEMI CIRCLE

### IMAGE AND RHYTHMS

Every person was created with the “*imago Dei*,” the image of God. We’re not here at random. Quite the opposite, we are intentional and known. The Psalmist celebrates that “He knit us together in our mother’s womb” (Psalm 139:13-14). Furthermore, we were created for relationship with the One whose image we bear. In the beginning, Genesis indicates that Adam and Eve regularly spent time with their maker walking in the Garden. When we learn that we carry the image of God, we learn that our lives can and should be patterned after his. **We should reflect his image.**

When we think about our rhythms, particularly in the West, we often see tired, weary and burned out people who are “living for the weekend.” Truth be told, most people are not intentional to produce and live with regular rhythms. Rather than living with great joy, many are living with great anxiety which is often related to work induced stress. It also may be the result of a frenetic lifestyle where families are trying to “juggle all the activities” or “cram one more thing in.” **In Genesis, we actually see a better and healthier pattern for which we were designed.**

When we examine the creation story, we see rhythms come in to play from the beginning. Over and over we hear, “There was evening and there was morning, the first day...There was evening and there was morning, the second day.” There was light and dark to mark those times. We know there are seasons built into creation. We know that plants have seasons of growth, fruit, death. Living things breathe in and breathe out. **Rhythms are everywhere.**

Finally, in the creation narrative we see that human beings, (not human doings, a false identity we have lived in for too long) were created. They were created on the sixth day. On the seventh day, the story says that the Creator rests. This day is actually the first full day of life for us. According to the story, humanity starts out from a place of rest. It is the eighth day that humanity goes about the task we were created for, “having dominion over the earth.” The work didn’t start immediately. The work flowed out of a resting place. If this is the pattern that we were created for, we need to pay closer attention to our rhythms, and seek to develop our personal and even corporate rhythms with this in mind: **We were created to work out of a place of rest. We were not created to rest from work.**

### REST/ABIDING

Jesus affirms the idea that we are to live in a healthy rhythm of rest and work. He says to his disciples in **John 15**, “*I am the true vine; you are the branches. If you abide in me, you will bear much fruit. Apart from me you can do nothing.*”

One of the easiest ways to see this concept is to think about the pendulum swing on something like a grandfather clock. (Draw the semi-circle with the pendulum.) There is a continuous back and forth motion. The pendulum swings a certain distance to the right and a certain distance to the left.

On the left side of the semi-circle we can write **abide or rest**. As we’ve already seen from the biblical picture, this is our starting point. The instructions Jesus gives us begin with “Abide.” The idea here is that we spend intentional time with him. We start our time with Jesus, listening for his voice and what he’s inviting us into. He demonstrated that pattern as well. In Mark 1:35 we read, “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” This is a regular occurrence for Jesus. He begins with abiding with the Father, with the source of clarity and direction.

We don’t just spend time with Jesus for clarity and direction, however. Like a trusted friend and brother, we spend time with him because we love him, and he loves us. We were created to spend time with him. We are restored in deep ways in our mind, body and spirit when we prioritize our time with Jesus.

### GROWING/PRUNING

As we spend seasons/time, abiding with Jesus, we must also experience seasons of growing and pruning. (Write growing/growth on the bottom right of the semi-circle and write pruning on the bottom left of the semi-circle). Jesus is using an agricultural metaphor as he often does to give us a better picture of what life with and in him is like. Immature plants cannot bear fruit. Overgrown plants can also not bear healthy fruit. You cannot force a young plant to bear fruit and an overgrown plant will not do the hard work of pruning itself. Both of these seasons are necessary seasons if we want to produce the kind of fruit Jesus wants us to bear.

Sometimes we will spend time abiding with Jesus, discover clarity or direction and then spend a season growing in that direction. Rather than arriving at a place of producing fruit,

however, we may need to go through a season of pruning and return to a place of abiding. Here we may discover greater clarity or direction and set back out into a season of growth. Once again, rather than producing fruit, we may need another season of pruning, cutting back and cutting out places or parts that are unhealthy or unproductive, returning once again to a place of abiding. What we can be confident of is the promise Jesus gives to us, "If you abide in me, you will bear much fruit."

It may be frustrating to walk through seasons of growth and pruning before experiencing fruit. We have to adopt a different posture during these times and remember that we're in a process of maturity. The sign of maturity is reproduction and eventually, through these swings of abiding/growing/pruning/abiding, we will reach a place where we bear fruit.

## WORK/BEARING FRUIT

While it might seem preferable to spend everyday relaxing on the beach in some endless vacation rather than a tiny cubicle, we were actually designed to work. In the creation narrative, Adam and Eve are told to, "Be fruitful and multiply." Being fruitful and multiplication both indicate work. (*Write work/bear fruit at the top of the right side of the semi-circle.*) They don't happen without some intentionality. Back to John 15, Jesus tells his disciples that it, "Is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit." In Ephesians 2:10 we read that we were created for, "good works which God prepared for us." As much as resting is a part of our Imago Dei or divine imprint, so too is working. We are little creators, invited into the story to work in bringing the kingdom on earth as it is in Heaven. The fruit we bear will always be a result of the work of Jesus in us.

## STRIVING/BURNOUT

In a culture driven by productivity over people, living with healthy rhythms of working from a place of rest will be counter-cultural. The greatest temptation will be to sacrifice rest and times of abiding to keep up with the ever-marching-forward-machine. These times of temptation will lead us to believe that we can "just keep going," "we'll take a break soon," "one more project," and so on. The lie is that we can work harder and produce more...on our own. That manufactured energy is called striving. (*Write striving to the right side of work/bear fruit.*) Anyone can maintain striving for a time, but the arm of the pendulum will only get heavier and eventually the weight of it will be crushing. The pendulum will swing in the opposite direction towards burnout, and the equal and opposite reaction will match the level of striving. (*Write*

*burnout to the left side of rest/abide.*) The greater the striving period in un-health, the greater the burnout, the longer the recovery. The greatest loss in these times will not be a job or finances, but significant relationships and our own physical, spiritual and mental health. This is not the way Jesus designed us. It's not the best that he wants for us.

## WHEN TO REST

These rhythms need to be engaged at multiple levels just as we see rhythms at micro and macro levels. Followers of Jesus should work toward healthy rhythms where they divert daily, withdraw weekly, and abandon annually.

The first place to aim at developing this rhythm is to divert daily. In Genesis we see that there was "morning and evening" built into the days. Originally, those that heard this would have recognized a time to work (morning) and a time to rest (evening). Each day, you need to carve space to feed our soul and feed your most important relationships. Each day, you withdraw to "your cell" to be alone with Jesus and to nourish your soul. Each day, you create spaces to connect with those who are most important to you. It might be in the morning over a cup of coffee. Or at dinner time as you intentional gather your family to eat, with everyone there a few times a week. It might be a quiet hour at the end of the day for the prayer of examine. You need to protect some space every day.

The second place to develop a resting rhythm is in withdrawing weekly. Remember in the creation narrative there is a day dedicated for resting. If God took a day of rest, then we can pretty easily intuit that we, his creation also need this rest. We rest one, we work six. You live six and one because it is fundamental to what it means to be a human being who is flourishing, instead of a human being who is scurrying. The Sabbath should be about two things: Fasting and Feasting. Fast from work. This will take some preparation. This will take some advance planning. The goal is to clear a day of anything that is work to you. Then, feast on the things that fill your soul: a walk in the woods, great art, great food, extending time to pray or enjoy worship music, read great books, linger over the Gospels, or a particular hobby: gardening, sports, photography, mountain biking, etc. You get the idea. Stay away from anything "work-oriented."

The third place, the macro level would be to abandon annually. This one is all about taking that vacation or an intentional spiritual retreat. Preferably both! In the Old Testament, God institutes festivals for the people. He was commanding his people to take a break from the busyness, to be restored and refreshed. Jesus also attended these



festivals and feasts. Each year, you need to be intentional to get away. Whatever amount of vacation time you have, take it all. And don't wait till you're at the end of the year. Look throughout the year and plan intentionally.

## HOW TO REST

The other element to think through is how you rest. A helpful work here is recreation. We've been trained to pronounce this word like what you do when you have some time for outdoor activities. But a hyphen will help us pronounce it differently, and a little shift of our thought process with this word can help us bring new life when we're recharging. What if we saw it as "Re-Creation?" What are the things in your life that you can do regularly that will also bring you rest apart from abiding with Jesus?

Does time at home with a good book and Starbucks bring you rest? Does a hike through the wilderness bring you joy? How about a workout? Would you prefer to be on the field playing a game of soccer or ultimate Frisbee? Would you be recharged by spending a day building something or planting a garden?

Do some of these things sound exhausting? Well, those are probably not things that will help you in the process of re-creating. Just because something might be physically tiring however, doesn't mean it's not the perfect thing for re-creation or recharging your soul during a time of rest.

What about the abiding piece? Well, the best way to discern this one is to ask this, "How did Jesus do it?" Well, he carved out time before he ever started ministry on a desert retreat with his Father. This was a time of intense temptation, yes, but it was here that he dealt with the identity issues of his appetites, approval, and authority. He returned from the time alone with a greater awareness of his identity and a clear sense of his mission to proclaim the kingdom.

We also read in Mark 1.35-39 that Jesus got up early in the morning to go be with his father. When the disciples found him, even though a crowd was ready to greet him, Jesus knew it was time to move to a new place. We see this pattern where Jesus gets alone with his Father and when he returns it's as if he has a clearer awareness of what he should do next. And he says things like, "I can only do what I see my Father doing." He had to get alone and abide with the Father, listening for his voice to know that direction.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Do you live a healthy rhythm of work and rest? Or is your life characterized by frenetic hurrying and stress?
- What does your current schedule tell you about what you believe about God's character? Does He function at the same pace? In control? Out of control?
- What will be the greatest challenge to reshape your rhythms around a balance of rest and work?
- What season do you feel you are currently living in? Rest, growing, pruning, producing fruit?
- How do you divert daily? Withdraw weekly? Abandon annually?
- How do you best re-create?
- Which of the following do want to grow in next?
- The rhythm of rest and work is a picture, a mirror, and a window.
  - Picture to understand: What do the prayer circles show you about being a disciple of Jesus?
  - Mirror to reflect: What do the prayer circles show you about yourself?
  - Window to see: What should you do about what you seen in and through the prayer circles?

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*\*The Rhythm of Rest and Work has been adapted from The Semi-Circle, which can be found in Mike Breen and Steve Cockram's book, Building a Discipling Culture (99-114). The examples from Scripture can be found in that same work on page 114. This tool is foundational in teaching people how to pattern their life in healthy rhythms the way Jesus did. We are grateful for the influencing work of 3DM.*

## KEY SCRIPTURES FOR THE SEMI CIRCLE

Genesis 1:26 – 2:3

John 15:1-8

Mark 2:13

Jesus is alone at the lake before teaching

Mark 3:7

Jesus withdraws with his disciples

Mark 3:13

Jesus goes up the mountainside and calls his disciples

Mark 4:35

Jesus leaves the crowds by getting into a boat

Mark 5:1

Jesus at the lake/hillside

Mark 5:21

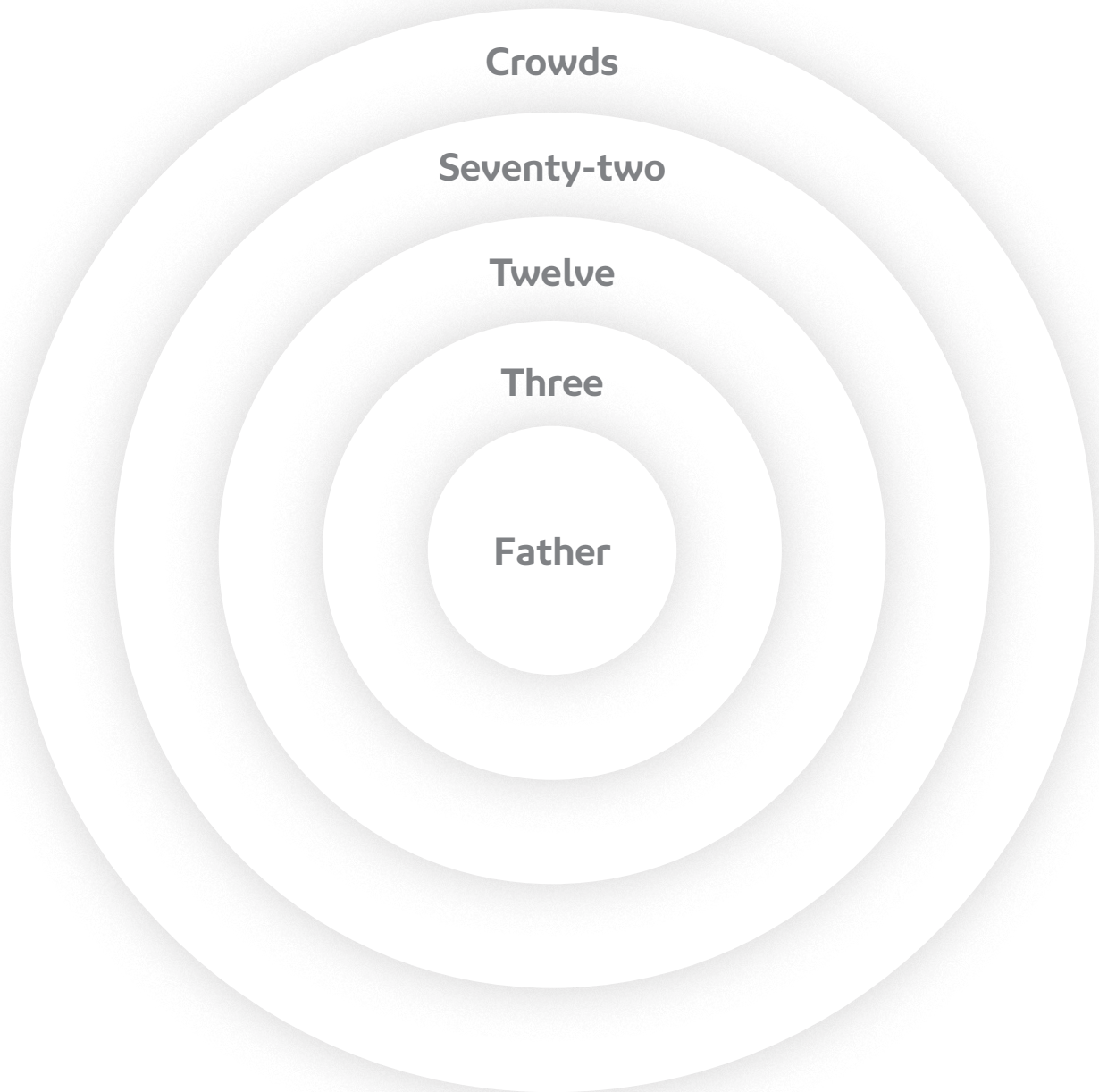
Jesus crosses the lake to the other side again

Mark 6:45-46

Jesus sends his disciples ahead, dismisses the crowd,  
and goes up the mountain to pray.



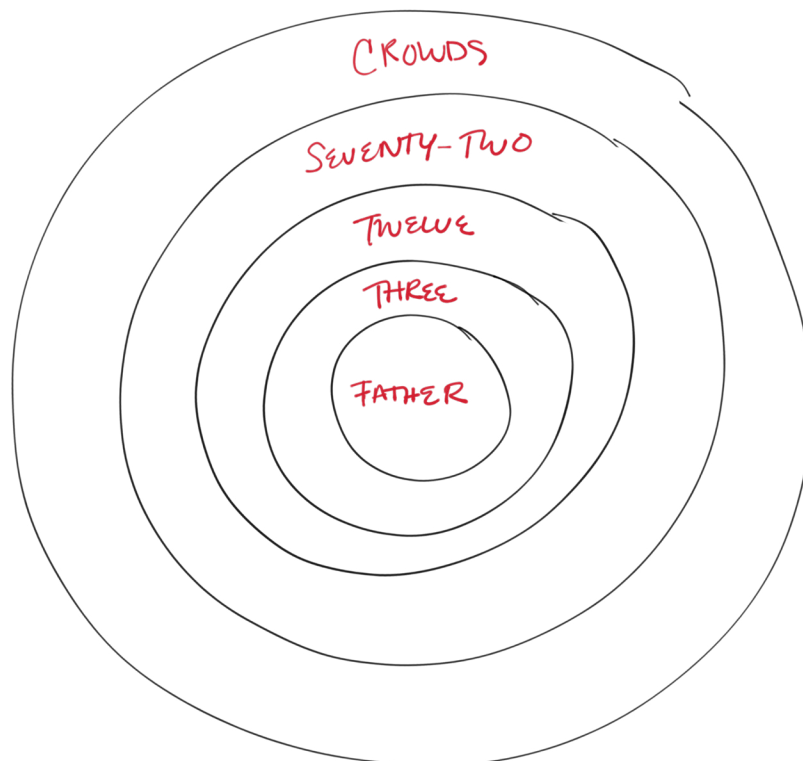
# **SPHERES OF INFLUENCE** Following Jesus in Relationship



## BEST PRACTICES FOR USING THE SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

- Remember this symbol is designed to be three things:
  - A Picture to understand key ideas regarding disciple-making:**  
What does this tell me about being a disciple?
  - A Mirror to see our reflection in:**  
What does this tell me about myself?
  - A Window to look at all of life through:**  
What should I do about it?
- We encourage you to read through the summaries five times before sharing it.
- Journal on the picture, mirror, and window questions above before sharing this. The degree to which you engage this symbol personally, is the degree to which you will be able to lead others into engagement.
- There are two versions included here: A four-minute summary and an extended summary.
- The main points are highlighted in teal in both versions. Commit these to memory.
- Key phrases are highlighted in red in the extended summary of the Spheres of Influence. Become fluent with these key phrases. The four-minute summary is comprised of only these key phrases.
- We encourage you to draw and explain the four-minute summary out loud three times before sharing it with someone else.
- When you share it with someone, draw the Spheres of Influence on a napkin or sheet of paper. Leave that drawing with them.
- Remember to read the situation and the spiritual interest of the person you are sharing this with. It may be wisest to just share the brief highlight. Or if the interest is there, use the extended version, making it conversational by using the discussion questions.
- After you share it, encourage the person you've shared it with to share it with another spiritually curious or hungry friend or family member within the next few days. In so doing, you are training every disciple to be a disciple who can make disciples from day one. This builds in reproduction and multiplication as the norm for every disciple.

## SPHERES OF INFLUENCE Following Jesus in Relationship



## A FOUR MINUTE SUMMARY OF THE SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

### Introduction Move #1: What kind of life are you living?

Some of the key words that describe our life and our culture are “scattered, busy, surface and temporary.” We’ve compartmentalized the different contexts that we live in so much that we’re like the entertaining plate spinners, moving from one arena to the next, hoping we haven’t dropped anything sensitive or precious, or that we haven’t lost any relationships in the process. We’re attempting to navigate our work relationships with our friends, and our family relationships with our hobbies. In the end, we’re not really advancing anything. At best, we have just enough bandwidth to exist in each of these different contexts. At worst, we’re frustrated, burned out and exhausted.

When we look at the life of Jesus, we can see a better narrative. Jesus says in Matthew 11, *“Are you tired, worn out, burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly”* (The Message 11.28-30).

One of the unforced, rhythmic ways Jesus lived was in the integration of his relationship patterns. While Jesus dealt with tensions as every relationship does, we can see when reading the gospels that Jesus’ relational world is both deep and wide.

A careful reading of the gospels will demonstrate that Jesus interacted with different sized groups of people at different times, for different purposes and to different depths. You can call these different contexts that Jesus operated in *Spheres of Influence* or very simply relationships.

### Introduction Move #2: We can follow Jesus in relationships.

*As disciples of Jesus, we can follow Jesus in relationships by organizing our spheres of influence the way Jesus did.* If we want to be intentional about investing in other people’s lives and making disciples, we have to be thoughtful and intentional about who we spend time with and how we spend that time. Jesus’ pattern answers all these deep human needs for community, flourishing, and legacy.

### Introduction Move #2: We can follow Jesus in relationships.

Let’s look at the different contexts where Jesus invested

his time. The first is what we could call a public space or what the gospels call *the crowds*. In this space we gather with large numbers of people for a common purpose. It might be a weekend worship experience, a sporting event or a concert. In the public space, we may know a few people, but we don’t know everyone well. Jesus gave His time to the crowds, but certainly not His best time.

### Relational Sphere #2: The 72 (Social Space)

That leads to the second context. We call this sphere of influence the social space. When the crowds dispersed, Jesus was most likely left with the 72. This was a group of people who are often around His ministry. The 72 would have been there for any event involving the crowds, perhaps even helping Jesus in some way. The 72 would have also been with Jesus for the parties and the weddings and the smaller gatherings He attended. **This group of people existed as a large social community, and probably much like a large extended family.** They were also trained for mission, to go and do the ministry they were watching Jesus do.

We also exist in social spaces. Social spaces are made up of 30-70 people. This is our tribe, people with whom we have a deeper sense of connection. These are people with whom you will share snapshots about your life. These snapshots may not be detailed, but they will be important. Here you have a different awareness of your belonging than you do with the crowds.

### Relational Sphere #3: The 12 (Personal Space)

The next sphere of influence is the personal space. This would have been the 12 disciples. The disciples were there for every event involving the crowds. They would have also been present at every party and social gathering Jesus attended. The disciples would have gone out as a part of the 72 as well. Their invitation was more personal, however. The 12 were often present with Jesus at times when no one else was present. The disciples were part of Jesus’ everyday life. To point out the most obvious and significant difference, we know the names of the 12 disciples, whereas we reference the larger two spheres of influence categorically. **In this sphere of influence, we share more openly and become more vulnerable. We open up to support one another and we also open up to challenge one another.**

### Relational Sphere #4: The 3 (Intimate Space)

The next level of influence we see in Jesus’ life is what we

call the intimate space. Jesus had three friends who were a part of the most intimate level. We hear more about Peter, James and John than we do about any of the other disciples. Once again, it's important to see the integration of Jesus' life. The three were a part of everything that involved the crowds, the 72 and the 12. Their experience was a deeper invitation. **People within this relational sphere have earned the right to challenge you when they're afraid something is not right with you. These friends or family are people you can be completely vulnerable and open with while being completely confident of the utmost confidentiality.** The people in the intimate spaces of your life are people who have shared deep life experiences with you. These relationships come through time and cultivation and they last through ups and downs.

### **Relational Sphere #5: The 1 (Father Space)**

The fifth space or the final sphere of influence is what we call the Father circle. We don't influence others in this sphere and others don't influence us. This is all about how we are shaped by our relationship with the Father. **When we examine Jesus' life, we can see that there was no other relationship that mattered more. Jesus made it a habit to get into solitude where He could be alone with His Father.** It's actually the time spent with the Father that we become aware of where we need to spend the rest of our time within the four other contexts.

**This integrated life is a better narrative than the fragmented worldview that our culture tries to write for us. Following Jesus in relationship means we should seek a greater level of integration within our spheres of influence.** When we do, we create time and space where we can be more available to invest our lives with those Jesus has given us the opportunity to bless.



## EXTENDED VERSION OF THE SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

### Introduction Move #1: What kind of life are you living?

What are some key words that describe life in our culture? Scattered? Busy? Surface? Temporary?

Most of us live very scattered lives. We've compartmentalized the different contexts that we live in so much that we're like the entertaining plate spinners, moving from one arena to the next, hoping we haven't dropped anything sensitive or precious, or that we haven't lost any relationships in the process. We're attempting to navigate our work relationships with our friends, and our family relationships with our hobbies. In the end, we're not really advancing anything. At best, we have just enough bandwidth to exist in each of these different contexts. At worst, we're frustrated, burned out and exhausted.

Jesus' words always write a better narrative. He says in Matthew 11, *"Are you tired, worn out, burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly"* (The Message 11.28-30).

One of the unforced, rhythmic ways Jesus lived was in the integration of his relationship patterns. While Jesus dealt with tensions as every relationship does, we can see when reading the gospels that Jesus' relational world is both deep and wide. We can learn these ways. We can learn to live freely and lightly just as Jesus invites us.

### Introduction Move #2: We can follow Jesus in relationships.

When we examine Jesus relational world, a sociological pattern emerges. We believe it's sacred. A careful reading of the gospels will demonstrate that Jesus interacted with different sized groups of people at different times, for different purposes and to different depths. You can call these different contexts that Jesus operated in Spheres of Influence or very simply relationships. (Write Relationships at the top of the page.)

As disciples of Jesus, we can follow Jesus in relationships by organizing our spheres of influence the way Jesus did. Why? Jesus is the master at the art of living. His pattern will lead to health and flourishing in our relationships and in our souls. The further we are from this pattern, the more scattered and superficial our relationships will

be. Consequently, the emptier our souls will feel, longing for community. Finally, the impact of our life will be diminished. If we want to be intentional about investing in other people's lives and making disciples, we have to be thoughtful and intentional about who we spend time with and how we spend that time. Jesus' pattern answers all these deep human needs for community, flourishing, and legacy.

Jesus interacted with others in five different spaces. Actually, we all can or do interact in these five different contexts. Let me highlight all five first:

	Jesus' Life	General Size	Soul Need
Public	The Crowds	(100s-1000s)	Inspiration/Celebration
Social	72	(30-70)	Shared Mission/community
Personal	12	(10-12)	Support/Challenge/Closeness
Intimate	3	(2-3)	Intimacy/Openness/Impact
Father	1	(1)	Identity/Destiny

We find a sense of belonging, purpose, connection, community or meaning to varying degrees depending on the context. While we need all these relational spheres, we can see even from Jesus' life that we do not have to spend our time equally in each space. However, we do need to regularly examine the amount of time we give to any one space.

### Relational Sphere #1: The Crowds (Public Space)

Let's look at the different contexts where Jesus invested his time. The first is what we could call a public space or what the gospels call *the crowds*. (Draw the largest circle and write crowds near the top.) When we read the gospels, we might see a passage like Matthew 8.1 that says, "When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed him." There are actually 34 references to *the crowds* in the gospels.

In this space we gather with large numbers of people for a common purpose. It might be a weekend worship experience, a sporting event or a concert. In the public space, we may know a few people, but we don't know everyone well. And, it's not the environment for getting to know everyone well. In this context we're gathering primarily for some level of inspiration and sense of belonging to something greater than ourselves. (Insert question: What crowds do you belong to? How much time do you spend in that context?)



Since we're examining the relational world of Jesus, we have to ask how Jesus interacted with the crowds. When we read the gospels, we can see that **Jesus gave His time to the crowds, but certainly not His best time.** He taught them and He fed them. He also often made comments that were difficult to hear and obey. In those instances, the crowds dispersed.

### Relational Sphere #2: The 72 (Social Space)

**That leads to the second context. We call this sphere of influence the social space.** *(Draw a circle inside of the crowds and label it 72 or Social Space.)* When the crowds dispersed, Jesus was most likely left with the 72. This was a group of people who are often around His ministry. The 72 would have been there for any event involving the crowds, perhaps even helping Jesus in some way. The 72 would have also been with Jesus for the parties and the weddings and the smaller gatherings He attended. **This group of people existed as a large social community, and probably much like a large extended family.** They were also trained for mission, to go and do the ministry they were watching Jesus do.

References to the 72 are not extensive in the gospel, but we know they are an important group of people. What we read in Luke 10 is that Jesus sent them out ahead of him to the towns and villages in order to heal the sick and to proclaim the kingdom. In that passage it also says they returned with joy because "even the demons obeyed them." When we between the lines we can see that these people were around Jesus enough that they felt confident to obey the commands Jesus was giving them. They were prepared.

**We also exist in social spaces. Social spaces are made up of 30-70 people.** This is our tribe, people with whom we have a deeper sense of connection. **These are people with whom you will share snapshots about your life.** These snapshots may not be detailed, but they will be important. Here you have a different awareness of your belonging than you do with the crowds. These are people who are involved in your parties, and people who share similar values or mission with you. *(Insert question: Can you think of what this looks like in your life right now? Are you involved in a softball league that tailgates before the weekend event? Are you in a cycling club?)*

### Relational Sphere #3: The 12 (Personal Space)

**The next sphere of influence is the personal space.** *(Draw a circle inside of the social space and label it 12 or Personal Space.)* This would have been the 12 disciples. The disciples were there for every event involving the crowds.

They would have also been present at every party and social gathering Jesus attended. The disciples would have gone out as a part of the 72 as well. Their invitation was more personal, however. The 12 were often present with Jesus at times when no one else was present. We see them in the boat with Jesus going across the sea, in the upper room for the ever-important Passover meal and in the garden before his execution. **The disciples were part of Jesus' everyday life.** This group would have seen the ins and outs of Jesus' three-year ministry to which the 72 and crowds would not have had access. To point out the most obvious and significant difference, we know the names of the 12 disciples, whereas we reference the larger two spheres of influence categorically.

The 12 are actively involved in ministry in unique ways, receiving direct training from Jesus. In Luke 9 we see that they were "called together... and given authority." In Mark 9, Jesus calls them to Himself to teach them about serving. In Mark 10 he pulls the disciples aside to explain what is happening. Jesus uses parables that often confuse the crowd, but with the disciples, he slows down to explain, teach and empower.

Again, we find a sense of belonging in personal spaces. **In this sphere of influence, we share more openly and become more vulnerable. We open up to support one another and we also open up to challenge one another.** In the personal space you can more fully live out the "one anothers" that we find in the New Testament like, "Love one another, serve one another, bear one another's burdens, pray for and encourage one another." *(Insert question: Where do you see yourself involved in personal spaces? Who are belong in your sphere of influence at this level? Can you name them and know personal information about their life?)*

### Relational Sphere #4: The 3 (Intimate Space)

**The next level of influence we see in Jesus' life is what we call the intimate space.** *(Draw a circle inside of the personal space and write the number 3 or Personal Space).* You can see how with each movement inward the circles get smaller and tighter. Jesus had three friends who were a part of the most intimate level. We hear more about Peter, James and John than we do about any of the other disciples. Once again, it's important to see the integration of Jesus' life. The three were a part of everything that involved the crowds, the 72 and the 12. **Their experience was a deeper invitation.**

We witness their presence at the Transfiguration that we find in Matthew 17. Jesus did not invite the 12 to this special experience. Only Peter, James and John are

allowed to be present. Jesus also invites Peter, James and John to go deeper into the garden to pray on the night before He is crucified. The mother of James and John, assuming Jesus was going to rule in a traditional context, asks Jesus if her sons can sit in places of power, at His right and left. Jesus renames Peter and has a tender moment of reconciliation with Peter on the beach after Jesus' resurrection.

Most people are aware of who belongs within this sphere of influence, who their closest friends are with whom they share all the details about the mundane, everyday stuff of life. Again, these are also the people we call first to celebrate milestones or significant events. These are the people we call in tragedy as well. **People within this relational sphere have earned the right to challenge you when they're afraid something is not right with you. These friends or family are people you can be completely vulnerable and open with while being completely confident of the utmost confidentiality.** We also do not have a great fear of rejection with these people.

These are not relationships that you can orchestrate. The people in the intimate spaces of your life are people who have shared deep life experiences with you. These relationships come through time and cultivation and they last through ups and downs. *(Insert question: Do you have a few really close friends like this with whom you share everything about your life?)*

### Relational Sphere #5: The 1 (Father Space)

The fifth space or the final sphere of influence is what we call the **Father circle**. *(Draw the final circle and write Father inside.)* **We don't influence others in this sphere and others don't influence us. This is all about how we are shaped by our relationship with the Father. When we examine Jesus' life, we can see that there was no other relationship that mattered more. Jesus made it a habit to get into solitude where He could be alone with His Father.**

When Jesus does this, He is taking time to remember and ground His identity as a beloved child. He's listening for the voice and direction of the Father. Jesus says things like, "I can only do what I see my Father doing, and I can only say what my Father has given me to say." How does He know what God is doing and saying? Jesus spent significant time with His Father.

Whenever it feels like we are out of control, or that we're losing our footing on who we are, experience unbelief of any kind, that should be an identifying marker that we need to spend more time with our Father. If we do not

have our identity rooted in the Father, it will take root in something else. Our narrative will be incorrect. Our security will be unstable. **It's actually the time spent with the Father that we become aware of where we need to spend the rest of our time within the four other contexts.** *(Insert question: Do you spend significant time with the Father as Jesus did? Is this a priority in your life?)*

### The Circles Overlap

When we look at Jesus' relational world, we see an overlap of the circles. The Father informed every decision Jesus made. The Father gets the most time and always remains at the center. The people who received more intentional direction and had more access to Jesus than anyone else get the next level of attention. We hear more about their stories and see their influence continue. Those three fit within the next sphere of influence, the twelve disciples, who also have great access to Jesus' world and ministry. The three and the twelve make up part of the 72, one level out. They receive less of Jesus' time, but still know him well enough to carry out the mission He sends them to accomplish. The crowds receive the least amount of time, but that environment becomes an invitation into deeper community life.

**This integrated life is a better narrative than the fragmented worldview that our culture tries to write for us.** If we pursue that lifestyle, we will live exhausted, without depth of relationship at any level, and most likely lacking a significant sense of personal belonging. **Following Jesus in relationship means we should seek a greater level of integration within our spheres of influence.** When we do, we create time and space where we can be more available to invest our lives with those Jesus has given us the opportunity to bless.

## ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON THE SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

### We all need all five relational spaces.

We need to live and relate in each “relational space” because each is conducive for nourishing a certain aspect of what it is to be a disciple, even a human being. We’ll experience the full flourishing effect of community when each social space is a normative part of our relational world. We must decide to follow Jesus into ALL these relational spaces. No one else can build these relational spaces for us. Each relational space has its own distinctive values as noted above.

### The more we can overlap the circles, the better.

The more we can overlap the circles, the more cohesive and powerful our experience of community will be. If we try to develop our personal social space (12) in one relational network and our social space (72) in another, we’ll easily find our relational world stretched too thin. The more our 3, 12, and 72 overlap, the more we’ll find we are actually doing life together like the early church.

### Intentionally develop diversity in your relational world.

Within the four relational spaces, Jesus had connections with people at all levels of spiritual interest, various world-views and lifestyles. He invited everyone to come in and experience life within the Kingdom. Even within his 12, Jesus had a surprising range of people, from tax collectors to fisherman to political zealots. It was more curry, a mixture of spices, than plain vanilla. He invited people to belong, long before they believed the same things as him. Anyone whose following Jesus will do the same, developing the same kind of diversity within the full range of relational spaces.

### The closer to the center, the more important it is to have shared mission and values.

Simultaneously, the closer people moved toward the center circles of Jesus world, you’ll find they shared an increasing alignment to His mission and values. Jesus was selective, particularly about the 12 and 3. The 12 and the 3 demonstrated shared mission and values through their willingness to drop everything and learn the way of Jesus. Like us, they were a jumble of beliefs, ideas, personal histories, and bad habits, but they knowingly pointed their feet toward Jesus and intentionally followed Him in all of life. As we develop our personal and intimate relationships, issues like shared values, shared mission, confidentiality, communication, trust, and expectations become increasingly important to clarify.

### Where to begin?

Begin by taking a snapshot of your current relational world. Start where God has placed you. Be intentional. Be open. Be patient. Developing this kind of intentional community doesn’t happen overnight. Quite simply, in our culture, this is one of the greatest challenges that face us, and it is a lifelong process. Make it your aim, starting with prayer, to move toward all these relational spaces.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Currently, how integrated is your life? Are your spheres of influence overlapping or fragmented?
- What are your spheres of influence?
- Are you over-committed? If so, what would it take to make a change?
- What does the public space look like for you? Where are you gathering with crowds and for what purpose? Does it bring great joy or stress?
- What does your social space look like? Who is your tribe? What level of relationship are you experiencing at this level?
- What does your personal space look like? Are you regularly gathering with 10-12 close friends? Do you have a clear level of influence in these relationships? Do you share common interests or mission?
- What does your intimate space look like? Are you regularly discipling 1-3 other people? Do you share common values that guide these relationships?
- How is your personal communion with the Father?
- How and to what degree is your relationship with the Father informing your other relationships?
- Diversity: How well does your relational world reflect the diversity we see in Jesus’ relational world? Write down the names folks you have genuine relationship with that are different from you in terms of beliefs, socio-economic status, ethnicity, lifestyle, etc.
- Share Values and Mission: To what level do those in your “inner circles” share with you the values and mission of Jesus?

## KEY SCRIPTURES FOR THE SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

### Crowds (Public Space)

Luke 14:25

Now large crowds were going along with him; and he turned and said to them,

Mark 10:1

Getting up, he went from there to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan; crowds gathered around him again, and, according to his custom, he once more began to teach them.

Matthew 8:1

When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed him.

Mark 5:21

When Jesus had crossed over again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around him; and so, he stayed by the seashore.

### 72 (Social Space)

Luke 10:1-24

### 12 (Personal Space)

Matthew 5:1-2

Jesus saw the crowds. So he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to teach them.

Matthew 10:1-4

Jesus calls the 12.

John 13:1-17:26

Account of the Last Supper

### 3 (Intimate Space)

Mt 17:1

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

Mk 5:37

He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James.

Mk 14:33

He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled.

### 1 (Father Space)

Jn 10:30

I and the Father are one.

Jn 5:19

Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

## Discovery Bible Studies for the Spheres of Influence

Matthew 11:25-30

Acts 2:42-47

Luke 10:1-4

Matthew 10:1-4

John 13:1-17

Matthew 17:1-8

Mark 5:35-43

John 15:1-8

Mark 1:25-39

1 John 3:1-2

### DBS Process (S.O.A.P.)

#### Scripture

- Read the passage
- Have someone put it in their own words

#### Observe

- What stands out to you?
- What does this text say about God?
- What does this text say about people?

#### Apply

- How can you specifically live out this passage in the next few days? (Everyone creates an 'I WILL' STATEMENT)

#### Person

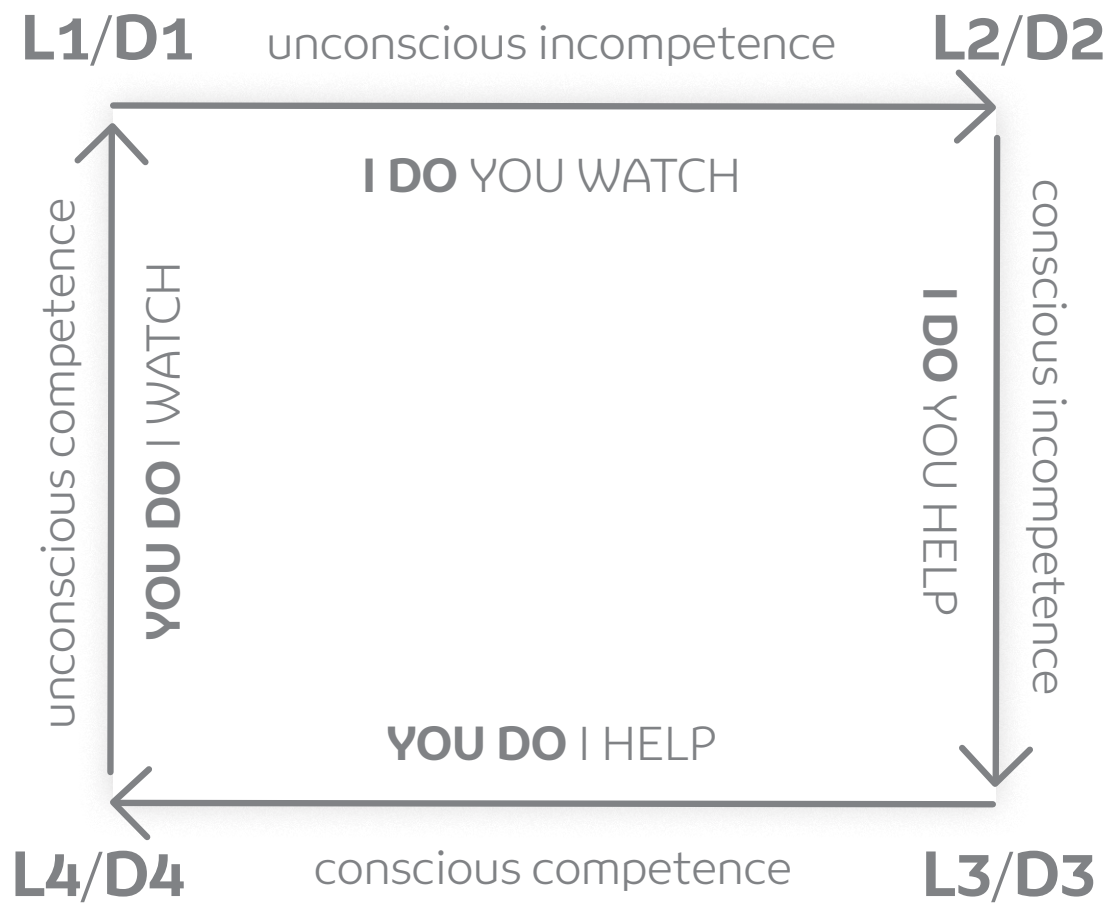
- Who are you going to tell about what you discovered this week?

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\*Spheres of Influence has been adapted from Launching Missional Communities: A Field Guide, Alex Absalom, Mike Breen, 3DM 1ST edition (2010). It has also been informed by the work of anthropologist Edward T. Hall and Joseph Myers in The Search to Belong (Zondervan, 2003).



# LEADERSHIP SQUARE Following Jesus in Reproduction



## BEST PRACTICES FOR USING THE LEADERSHIP SQUARE

- Remember this symbol is designed to be three things:

1. **A Picture to understand key ideas regarding disciple-making:**

What does this tell me about being a disciple?

2. **A Mirror to see our reflection in:**

What does this tell me about myself?

3. **A Window to look at all of life through:**

What should I do about it?

- We encourage you to read through the summaries five times before sharing it.

- Journal on the picture, mirror, and window questions above before sharing this. The degree to which you engage this symbol personally, is the degree to which you will be able to lead others into engagement.

- There are two versions included here: A four-minute summary and an extended summary.

- The main points are highlighted in teal in both versions. Commit these to memory.

- Key phrases are highlighted in red in the extended summary of the Leadership Square. Become fluent with these key phrases. The four-minute summary is comprised of only these key phrases.

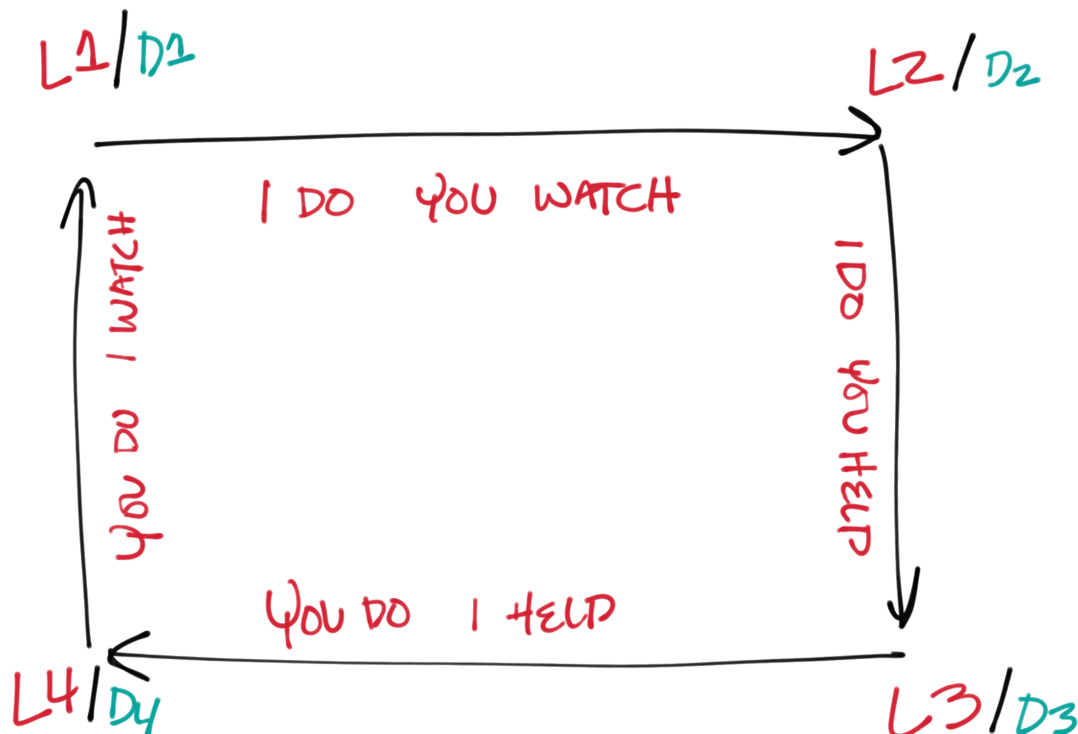
- We encourage you to draw and explain the four-minute summary out loud three times before sharing it with someone else.

- When you share it with someone, draw the Leadership Square on a napkin or sheet of paper. Leave that drawing with them.

- Remember to read the situation and the spiritual interest of the person you are sharing this with. It may be wisest to just share the brief highlight. Or if the interest is there, use the extended version, making it conversational by using the discussion questions.

- After you share it, encourage the person you've shared it with to share it with another spiritually curious or hungry friend or family member within the next few days. In so doing, you are training every disciple to be a disciple who can make disciples from day one. This builds in reproduction and multiplication as the norm for every disciple.

## LEADERSHIP SQUARE Following Jesus in Reproduction





# A FOUR MINUTE SUMMARY OF THE LEADERSHIP SQUARE

## Introduction

When we hear the word, “reproduction,” the first words that come to mind are often, “babies and parents, and new birth.” When we think about the command Jesus gave to go and make disciples, we are thinking of the same ideas in the spiritual sense. Jesus is calling us to be spiritual mothers and fathers who will walk with him to coach and encourage others to be all that they can be.

The narrative most often being written for us is, “Go get the glory. Be the hero.” The narrative Jesus modeled for us is, “Equip and empower others to lead out of their gifts and strengths and be the hero-maker.” As disciples of Jesus, we can follow Jesus in reproduction by being servant leaders who raise up new leaders who are equipped to do the same. As we make disciples who make disciples, we will multiply a movement of the people of God.

## Jesus Leadership Style

In Mark 10, Jesus told His disciples that there are some who are regarded as rulers who lord it over their subjects. In other words, they abuse their power and they constantly remind their followers about who is in charge. Jesus instructs His disciples with by saying, “Not so with you. Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first, must be a slave to all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” Jesus’ leadership model is about serving and empowering others. It’s about considering other’s needs as more important.

If we follow the story of Jesus and the disciples in Scripture, we can see that Jesus has a clear pathway for reproducing leadership through disciple-making. We call this pathway the Leadership Square.

## Invitation to Discipleship (L1/D1)

At the beginning of the leadership square is an invitation. Jesus called the first disciples with a clear invitation, “Come, follow me.” Jesus extends an invitation to those who are willing. At this point, the leader must be directive, giving clear expectations and setting examples and a pathway that the disciples can follow. The leader must take a posture in this phase that says, “I do, you watch.” But the leader should always lead with humility, as should we. We lead out of love and a desire to help another follower of Jesus become all that they can be in Him.

The disciple in phase one will most likely be excited about the relationship being formed. However, in truth, they will be at a place of unconscious incompetence. The word incompetent here is not designed to be negative; rather, it is used to identify the reality, “you don’t know what you don’t know.” The disciple will have to learn tools and skills that can later be reproduced.

## Movement to L2/D2

Jesus doesn’t lead his disciples with this same style for all three years of His ministry. We see in Luke 9 two stories where the disciples are now participating in the ministry. The first is the feeding of the 5,000 and the second involves casting out a demon. In both of these stories, they are active in the ministry, but they still need some instruction. These accounts show us that at some point the leadership style of the leader and the attitude of the learner begin to shift. In this phase of the relationship, the leader has moved beyond a directive style of leadership and is now more of a coach. You could describe the style of leadership with this phrase, “I do, you help.” The leader will need to offer much grace in this phase.

This is important because the disciple will move into a place of conscious incompetence. The student is now more aware of what they don’t know, and they are constantly working to improve. As they make mistakes, as they grow, they need to be reminded of why they are giving so much of themselves to the process when they may feel more failure than success. Often times we get stuck in D2 because we want to grow but it requires time and great effort, and we lose the patience or vision to keep pressing forward. This phase is necessary for every leader and disciple to experience.

## Movement to L3/D3

Jesus always had a greater vision for the disciples than just helping Him do a few things. He wanted to raise them up as leaders who could reproduce other leaders. They’re not just along for the ride anymore, they are an important part of the movement. They are now beginning to do the work on their own, but Jesus is not finished teaching them. The disciples have a capacity to do, but there are still lessons to be learned. In this phase we must really begin to empower and release those that we lead. We characterize this phase as “You do, I help.” The leader will spend less time directing and more time inviting feedback and asking questions.

The disciples in this phase have moved to a place of conscious competence. They are aware of their strengths and weaknesses. They know how to work out of their strengths and compensate for their weaknesses. The disciple is often far more confident and comfortable in their own leadership style and rhythms because of the amount of time they have had to develop their skills. Insecurities are fading and ability to lead is increasing.

#### **Movement to L4/D4**

Jesus never leaves us where He finds us. In the final phase, the leader moves to L4 and the disciple moves to D4. The secure and effective leader will hand off leadership to others, making a shift into a full-time role of champion. We use this phrase of the leader, "You do, I watch."

This is more than just watching, however. The leader should celebrate and encourage this leader to continue on in reproducing disciples

The disciple in this phase reaches a place of unconscious competence. They are no longer working hard to perform tasks that previously they struggled with. They have a level of confidence in who they are in Christ and they act out of that identity and in the strength of their personal calling.

As we lead others, it's important to continually make an assessment of where we are in our leadership, and where those that follow are in their discipleship. We do not need to rush the process. We should continue to make adjustments to help people move naturally through each phase, following Jesus in reproducing disciples who make disciples.

# EXTENDED VERSION OF THE LEADERSHIP SQUARE

## Introduction

When we hear the word, “reproduction,” the first words that come to mind are often, “babies and parents, and birth.” When we think about the Jesus command to, “Go, and make disciples...,” we’re actually talking about the same things in the Spiritual sense. **Jesus is calling us to be spiritual mothers and fathers who will walk with him to coach and encourage others to be all that they can be.**

This stands in contrast to our culture which emphasizes a form of individualized leadership where you should strive to be the hero and center of the story. We hear the catch phrase, “If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself.” The narrative being written for us is, “Go get the glory. Be the hero.” **The narrative Jesus modeled for us is, “Equip and empower others to lead out of their gifts and strengths and be the hero-maker.”**

**As disciples of Jesus, we can follow Jesus in reproduction by being servant leaders who raise up new leaders who are equipped to do the same. As we make disciples who make disciples, we will multiply a movement of the people of God.**

## Jesus’ Leadership Style

Let’s start with a clear understanding of Jesus’ leadership style. **In Mark 10, Jesus told His disciples that there are some who are regarded as rulers who lord it over their subjects. In other words, they abuse their power and they constantly remind their followers about who is in charge. They don’t care about those they lead. Power means everything to them. Then Jesus uses an unambiguous and pointed statement to his disciples. He says, “Not so with you. Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first, must be a slave to all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”**

Not so with you! It’s a sharp contrast and Jesus was already modeling and would continue to model this leadership style with His disciples. **Jesus’ leadership model is about serving and empowering others. It’s about considering other’s needs as more important.**

If we follow the story of Jesus and the disciples in Scripture, we can see that Jesus has a clear pathway for reproducing leadership through disciple-making. It is a journey that the disciples followed and reproduced, and one we can follow and reproduce as well. **We call this pathway the Leadership Square.** The square is helpful in seeing the perspective and different stages of the leader and the disciple.

## Invitation to discipleship (L1/D1)

At the beginning of the leadership square is an invitation. Jesus called the first disciples with a clear invitation, **“Come, follow me.”** What is interesting about this invitation is that he calls a diverse group of men to come learn His ways. We do not get a sense that Jesus spent a lengthy amount of time evaluating their skills and abilities, determining if they would be qualified candidates. He’s not looking for the best and the brightest. **Jesus extends an invitation to those who are willing.**

The leader and the disciple are both in phase one. *(Draw an arrow towards the right. At the left end of the arrow write L1 above the line and D1 below the line).* At this point, the leader must be directive, giving clear expectations and setting examples and pathway that the disciples can follow. **The leader must take a posture in this phase that says, “I do, you watch.”** *(Write, “I do, you watch,” across the top of the arrow.)* For many of us, we are wary when a person takes this sort of posture. It’s important to remember that in the beginning of His ministry, Jesus led this way. He was the one performing the miracles. He was the one healing the sick and preaching. Secondly, it’s important to remember that while Jesus was modeling this way for the disciples, He always led with humility, as should we. Thirdly, remember that we want to lead as spiritual mothers and fathers. **We lead out of love and desire to help another follower of Jesus become all that they can be in Him. At the L1 phase, we have to lead clearly and consistently.**

The disciple in phase one will most likely be excited about the relationship being formed. However, in truth, **they will be at a place of unconscious incompetence.** *(Write unconscious incompetence below the line.)* The word incompetent here is not designed to be negative, rather, it is used to identify the reality, “you don’t know what you don’t know.” **The disciple will have to learn tools and skills that can later be reproduced.**

Because we should all be disciples as well as people who disciple others, we all have areas where we are at a D1. Remember to continually exercise humility in learning and in leadership.

## Movement to L2/D2

**Jesus doesn’t lead his disciples with this same style for all three years of His ministry.** The disciples, likewise, do not remain in the first phase. Jesus begins to involve them in different ways. **We see in Luke 9 two stories where the disciples are now participating in the ministry, but they**

**still need some instruction.** In the first story, the disciples want to send the crowds away to get food, but Jesus has other plans. He includes the disciples in the distribution of food and in ministering to the people. Only a few verses later, the disciples are attempting to cast out a demon, but they are unable. We learn in Matthew that the disciples asked why they were unable to cast the demon out. Jesus instructs them that they had little faith. He's inviting them deeper into ministry and when they struggle, Jesus instructs them further.

**These accounts show us that some point the leadership style of the leader and the attitude of the learner begin to shift.** *(Draw an arrow down forming the right side of the square. At the formed corner, write L2 on the outside of the square and D2 on the inside of the square.)* **In this phase of the relationship, the leader has moved beyond a directive style of leadership and is now more of a coach. You could describe the style of leadership with this phrase, "I do, you help."** *(Write "I do, you help" on the outside of the line.)* The leader is extending a deeper invitation by allowing the disciple to participate in more of a hands-on way. The process still leans towards the leader, but the learner is walking more shoulder to shoulder.

**The leader will need to offer much grace in this phase.** As a disciple is taking on more responsibility, you can be sure there will be mistakes. This is how we all learn. The leader will also need to continue to offer high vision, or a continual reminder of the why, behind the what. **This is important because the disciple will move into a place of conscious incompetence.** *(Write conscious incompetence inside the line.)* **The student is now more aware of what they don't know, and they are constantly working to improve. As they make mistakes, as they grow, they need to be reminded of why they are giving so much of themselves to the process when they may feel more failure than success. Often times we get stuck in D2 because we want to grow but it requires time and great effort and we lose the patience or vision to keep pressing forward. This phase is necessary for every leader and disciple to experience.**

*(Insert a personal story. I'm personally terrible at details. As we build community in our neighborhood, I excel at inviting people and creating an environment of hospitality. However, when it comes to actually having everything in place, like plates and silverware for everyone to eat, I don't even think about those things. I'm aware of how bad I am at this, and my wife always has to remind me. That's a small scale, sort of humorous example. Others might be inability to lead a gathering of people, how to pray or how to meet your neighbors.)*

Once again, as disciples and discipplers, we all have areas

where we function as L2 and D2. As one leading others, do you exhibit patience and continue to remind those you lead of the why? As a student, do you spend more time in despair or excitement? Do you need more vision, more grace, or more time from the person leading you?

### **Movement to L3/D3**

**Jesus always had a greater vision for the disciples than just helping Him do a few things. He wanted to raise them up as leaders who could reproduce other leaders.** As Jesus spends more and more time with His disciples training them and coaching them, He begins to redefine their relationship and entrusts them to greater leadership. In John 15 Jesus says, "Greater love has no one than this, that a man would lay down His life for His friends. You are my friends if you do what I have commanded. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his masters business, but everything I that I have learned from my Father I have made known to you." That's a significant shift. **They're not just along for the ride anymore, they are an important part of the movement.** Again, in Luke 9 we see that Jesus sends out the 12 on a mission. In Luke 10, they are surely a part of the 72 that go to the next towns and villages healing the sick and casting out demons.

**They are now beginning to do the work on their own, but Jesus is not finished teaching them.** Only a chapter later He is teaching them how to pray, and just a few chapters after that, Jesus is teaching them about the cost of discipleship. **The disciples have a capacity to do, but there are still lessons to be learned.**

The L3 and D3 phase is not much easier than the previous. *(Draw an arrow forming the bottom of the square. At the formed corner, write L3 on the outside of the square and D3 on the inside of the square.)* **In this phase we must really begin to empower and release those that we lead.** For an insecure leader, this can be difficult. The leader in this phase moves more into a pastoral posture. **We characterize this phase as "You do, I help."** *(Write "You do, I help," on the outside of the square.)* **The leader now needs to coach and champion. The leader will spend less time directing and more time inviting feedback and asking questions.** Jesus has given them one of the greatest leadership lessons by continuing on to this phase: Give yourself away, give leadership away. Reproduce. See how much more we accomplish as we do.

**The disciples in this phase have moved to a place of conscious competence.** *(Write conscious competence on the inside of the square.)* They're now better in more areas than areas where they struggle. They are aware of what they

are good at and what they are not good at. Even in areas where they are stronger or growing stronger, they may still have to focus their attention to accomplish the task. The disciple is often far more confident and comfortable in their own leadership style and rhythms because of the amount of time they have had to develop their skills. Insecurities are fading and ability to lead is increasing.

*(Insert a personal story: I learned this recently as I was playing keys instead of guitar which is my primary instrument. I knew what chords I needed to play and what notes I was going to play. However, as I'm still learning to play piano, it doesn't come naturally. I'm consciously competent at the piano. I know what I need to do. On the guitar I wouldn't have to think about it. On the piano I have to concentrate hard. Other examples might be your knowledge of a discipleship tool, but you haven't fully internalized the tool yet. You can teach it, but you have to work hard to remember all the pieces. The tool is important and beginning to shape your life, but not to the level that you can easily teach someone else.)*

### Movement to L4/D4

Jesus never leaves us where He finds us. As we read the gospels, we see a transformation of these fisherman and tax collectors to a group who began leading the greatest movement in all of history. It's not what they had in mind in the beginning. In fact, they were probably quite shocked when Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." In truth, it's what He had been setting them up for all along. Can you imagine how quickly that spark would have been put out if Jesus had seen Peter in the boat and started with, "Go into all the world," before the invitation of "Come, follow me"? Peter would likely not have dropped his nets. The journey was necessary. The progression equipped the disciples to carry the gospel to the end of their known world and it's still spreading.

In the final phase, the leader moves to L4 and the disciple moves to D4. *(Draw the final arrow, closing in the square. In the bottom left corner, write L4 on the outside of the square and D4 on the inside of the square.)* The secure and effective leader will hand off leadership to others, making a shift into a full-time role of champion. We use this phrase of the leader, "You do, I watch." *(Write "You do, I watch," on the outside of the square.)* This is more than just watching, however. The leader should celebrate and encourage this leader to continue on in reproducing disciples. The relationship is not over, but a new level of friendship is reached.

The disciple in this phase reaches a place of unconscious competence. *(Write "unconscious competence" on the inside of the square.)* They are no longer working hard to perform

tasks that previously they struggled with. They have a level of confidence in who they are in Christ and they act out of that identity and in the strength of their personal calling. It does not mean they cease to learn. We will all continue to learn and grow in new areas. Rather, it means they are competent to repeat the process with another.

*(Insert a personal story. Again, music is an easy example for me. When it comes to playing a song or leading a congregation, it comes very natural for me as I have years of experience. It doesn't mean I don't trust in Jesus to lead through me and rely on prayer and the Holy Spirit. It means in that arena of leadership, I have been taught, encouraged, and grown to a level of leadership that now I teach others how to do the same.)*

As with any other discipleship tool. It is important that we first examine our own life and determine where we are in each of these phases. Can you think of where you are on the leadership continuum in all four areas? Can you think of where you are on the discipleship continuum in all four areas?

As we lead others, it's important to continually make an assessment of where we are in our leadership, and where those that follow are in their discipleship. We do not need to rush the process. We should continue to make adjustments to help people move naturally through each phase, following Jesus in reproducing disciples who make disciples.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is your own personal narrative in light of the leadership square? Have you been driven to accomplish on your own, or do you see yourself as empowering and equipping others?
- Knowing yourself, which phase looks like it will be the most challenging to you? Inviting people to follow you? Sharing leadership? Championing another? Releasing and sending leaders?
- Does seeing yourself as a spiritual mother or father challenge you or encourage you? Why?
- Can you identify examples from your own life where you can find yourself in D1/2/3/4 and L1/2/3/4?
- What do you need in your discipleship to move to the next phase?
- What leadership steps do you need to take to help those you are discipling move to the next phase?
- Are there insecurities or fears that are a barrier to this movement?

## KEY SCRIPTURES

Matthew 4:19

Mark 10:42

Luke 22

Luke 9

John 15

Matthew 28

## Discovery Bible Studies

Luke 22:24-27

(L1/D1)

Mark 2:13-14

Luke 5:1-11

(L2/D2)

Luke 9:10-17

1 Corinthians 4:14-16 (& 1 Cor 11:1)

(L3/D3)

Matthew 10:5-16

Titus 3:1-11

(L4/D4)

Matthew 28:16-20

Mark 16:14-20

1 Timothy 4:1-8

## DBS Process (S.O.A.P.)

### Scripture

- Read the passage
- Have someone put it in their own words

### Observe

- What stands out to you?
- What does this text say about God?
- What does this text say about people?

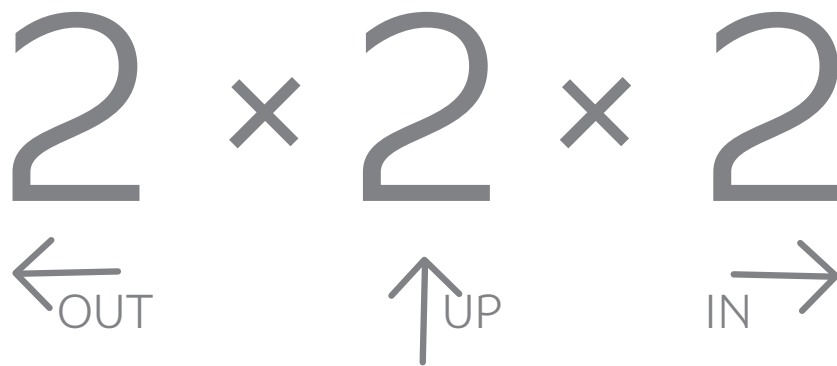
### Apply

- How can you specifically live out this passage in the next few days? (Everyone creates an 'I WILL' STATEMENT)

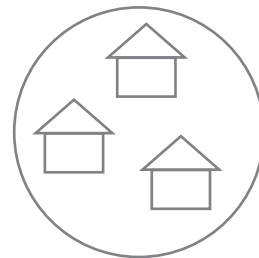
### Person

- Who are you going to tell about what you discovered this week?

## 2-2-2 RHYTHM Following Jesus in Missional Community



HOUSE



HUB



## BEST PRACTICES FOR USING 2-2-2

- Remember this symbol is designed to be three things:

1. **A Picture to understand key ideas regarding disciple-making:**

What does this tell me about being a disciple?

2. **A Mirror to see our reflection in:**

What does this tell me about myself?

3. **A Window to look at all of life through:**

What should I do about it?

- We encourage you to read through the summaries five times before sharing it.

- Journal on the picture, mirror, and window questions above before sharing this. The degree to which you engage this symbol personally, is the degree to which you will be able to lead others into engagement.

- There are two versions included here: A four-minute summary and an extended summary.

- The main points are highlighted in teal in both versions. Commit these to memory.

- Key phrases are highlighted in red in the extended summary of 2-2-2. Become fluent with these key phrases. The four-minute summary is comprised of only these key phrases.

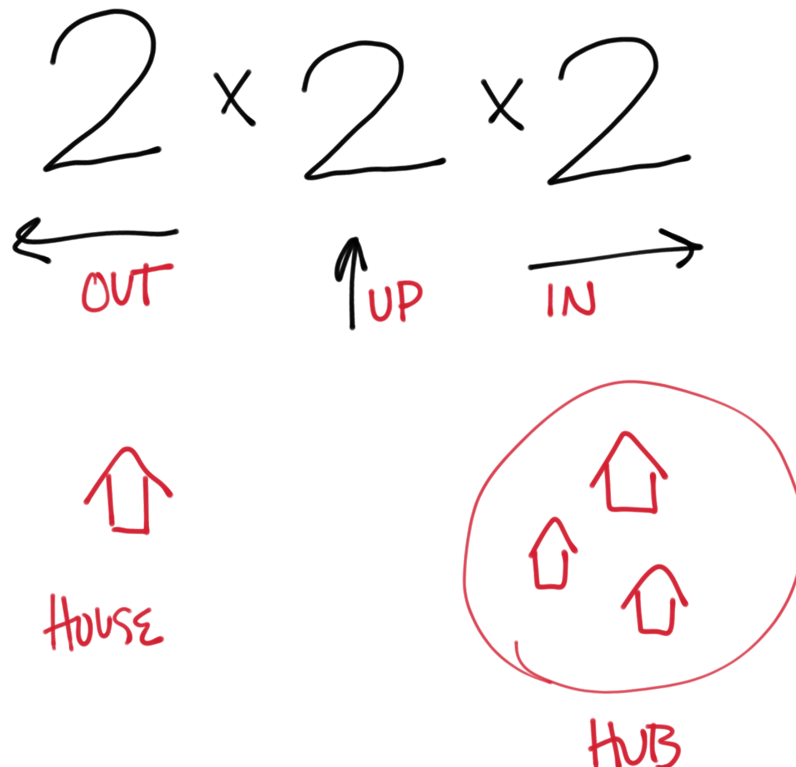
- We encourage you to draw and explain the four-minute summary out loud three times before sharing it with someone else.

- When you share it with someone, draw the 2-2-2 on a napkin or sheet of paper. Leave that drawing with them.

- Remember to read the situation and the spiritual interest of the person you are sharing this with. It may be wisest to just share the brief highlight. Or if the interest is there, use the extended version, making it conversational by using the discussion questions.

- After you share it, encourage the person you've shared it with to share it with another spiritually curious or hungry friend or family member within the next few days. In so doing, you are training every disciple to be a disciple who can make disciples from day one. This builds in reproduction and multiplication as the norm for every disciple.

## 2-2-2 RHYTHM Following Jesus in Missional Community



## A FOUR MINUTE SUMMARY OF 2-2-2

### Introduction

One of the biggest obstacles to deep meaningful community on mission is pace of life.

Instead of human beings, we often default to human doings, hurrying from place to place with too much to do. The cultural narrative that we're given teaches us to be obsessed with going faster. In the lifestyle of Jesus, we find the solution to the frenetic busyness of our culture. Anchored in the Bible, steeped in history of the Hebrew people, embodied in Jesus, and practiced by the New Testament church, we find the answer to our modern-day dilemma in one word: rhythm. As disciples of Jesus, we choose to follow Jesus in rhythm as we live on mission in community. Again, we can go to Matthew 11 where Jesus says this to us:

*"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace."*  
Matthew 11:28-30 (MSG)

### Rhythms

What is rhythm? It means finding a sustainable beat for life.

#### Daily Rhythms

First of all, God built rhythm into the day. In Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31, it says this, "And there was evening, and there was morning – the first (second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth) day." For the ancient Hebrew, there is a divine beat here that governed the pattern of every day. The work of the Hebrew was agrarian and therefore, productivity was accomplished during daylight hours. When the sun would fall, there was time for family and friends sharing a meal. There was time for story-telling around the fire. The basic pattern of normal day for the Hebrews went like this: 12 hours available for productivity; four hours available for relationships, and eight hours available for sleep.

#### Weekly Rhythms

Not only was there a daily rhythm, but a weekly rhythm. In Exodus 20 it says, "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work..." The rhythm here is work six and rest one. God takes the idea of a day of rest as seriously as He takes "Do not steal, lie, or commit adultery," but we seem to think we can break this commandment without consequence. The fact is, that

as far as God is concerned, the fourth commandment ("Remember the Sabbath") is just as important as the other nine.

#### Yearly Rhythms

Not only was there a daily and weekly rhythm, God built rhythms into the year through seasons and in the festivals that the Hebrew people celebrated. Within each year, there were seven specified feasts. Basically, God asked his people to party seven times a year. Jesus took this ancient idea of rhythm, reinterpreted it, embodied it in his life, and passed it on to the early church. We read this in Acts 2:

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

#### Lifestyle Rhythms

The language we're using to summarize the lifestyle rhythms is BREATHE AND BLESS. Every member of the simple church is a missionary living out the BLESS rhythms of: Begin in Prayer, Listen and Engage, Eat, Serve and Story.

#### Missional Community Rhythm: 2 OUT

Another key rhythm is the 2 - 2 - 2 Rhythm. This is a monthly rhythm that guides each simple church to move forward on mission together. Here's what we want to suggest as a starting point, 2 Out, 2 Up, and 2 In.

The first rhythm is OUT. This rhythm leads us to schedule intentional time to throw one party and find one time a month to serve together as a missional team. Once a month, plan a party that is an open invitation to other sojourners, the people you're investing in where you live work and play. Once a month, look for a way to serve together in your neighborhood or network. Parties and serving often create opportunities to share the gospel story and communicate the better narrative we are

inviting people to join. This first rhythm also opens up the pathway for your missional team to engage that sense of belonging in the social space or The 72.

### Missional Community Rhythm: 2 UP

The second rhythm is UP. Twice a month, meet with your missional team. This will be a gathering of the core of your simple church. This is a time to focus the community in spiritual practices, strengthening the core through a shared meal, prayer, listening, discussing the Scriptures and serving each other, and planning for mission in your neighborhood or network. As we go back to examine the early church rhythm, it says they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and prayer. At a minimum, missional teams should aim to gather twice a month for this purpose. This rhythm, in a similar way as the out rhythm does, provides a pathway for individuals to engage that sense of belonging in the personal space or The 12. In the personal space we can more easily and tangibly practice the One Anothers that we find the early church practicing.

### Missional Community Rhythm: 2 IN

The final rhythm is IN. We encourage every simple church to connect IN with the larger body of Christ, an organized church. For many who have had the framework of weekend worship experiences, this might be engaging in the Sunday morning gathering. It will help individuals within your simple church engage that sense

of belonging at the public space, or with The Crowds. This space is inspirational and reminds us that we are a part of a greater movement than what is happening in our neighborhoods or networks of relationships. We encourage each simple church to connect with an organized congregation that shares the value of a reproducing disciple-making movement.

### The Rhythm Continuum

The 2 - 2 - 2 Rhythm is on a continuum that highlights one of the core frameworks of simple churches: Hubs and Houses. At the Out end of the continuum are Houses. The practices of throwing parties and serving our neighborhoods and networks, as well as the communal Up rhythms can happen in our homes. On the other end of the continuum are the Hubs. Every time we worship with the organized body, we are practicing the Up rhythm at a macro level and we're reminded of the greater redemptive work occurring within the full body of Christ.

## EXTENDED VERSION OF THE 2-2-2

### Introduction

One of the biggest obstacles to deep meaningful community on mission is pace of life.

Instead of human beings, we often default to human doings, hurrying from place to place with too much to do. The cultural narrative that we're given teaches us to be obsessed with going faster. We'll buy almost anything if its name promises to help us go faster. (Federal Express, Sprint, Quicken, Slim Fast).

We are addicted to speed and that leaves us with no margins. One thing goes wrong, one interruption, one delay, and we can't catch up. There's this constant sense of feeling rushed or fatigued.

In the lifestyle of Jesus, we find the solution to the frenetic busyness of our culture. Anchored in the Bible, steeped in history of the Hebrew people, embodied in Jesus, and practiced by the New Testament church, we find the answer to our modern-day dilemma in one word: rhythm. As disciples of Jesus, we choose to follow Jesus in rhythm as we live on mission in community. Again, we can go to Matthew 11 where Jesus says this to us:

*"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. Matthew 11:28-30 (MSG)*

### Rhythms

What is rhythm? It means finding a sustainable beat for life. Rhythm is a beat that holds a song together. Rhythm is also what holds a life together in Christ. It's rhythm that holds a community together in Christ.

### Daily Rhythms

Here's a quick overview of the centrality of rhythm in the Story of the Scriptures. First of all, God built rhythm into the day. In Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31, it says this, "And there was evening, and there was morning – the first (second, third, forth, fifth, sixth) day."

These may not seem like a big deal, but there is a pattern here, a rhythm developing. Over and over, there was morning/there was evening, there was morning/there was evening. Now, for the average person in modern day America, we don't feel that rhythm. For the ancient Hebrew, there is a divine beat here that governed the

pattern of every day. Since the industrial revolution and the invention of the light bulb, we've completely lost this sense of daily rhythm. The work of the Hebrew was agrarian and therefore, productivity was accomplished during daylight hours. When the sun would fall, there was time for family and friends sharing a meal. There was time for story-telling around the fire. The basic pattern of normal day for the Hebrews went like this: 12 hours available for productivity; four hours available for relationships, and eight hours available for sleep.

### Weekly Rhythms

Not only was there a daily rhythm, but a weekly rhythm. God built rhythm into the week. In Exodus 20 it says, "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work...(Exodus 20:9-10)

The rhythm here is work six and rest one. Six and one. God takes the idea of a day of rest as seriously as He takes "Do not steal, lie, or commit adultery," but we seem to think we can break this commandment without consequence. In fact, we often brag about how busy, how overworked, and how completely stressed we are. The fact is, that as far as God is concerned, the fourth commandment ("Remember the Sabbath") is just as important as the other nine. Six and one, that's a weekly rhythm.

### Yearly Rhythms

Not only was there a daily and weekly rhythm, God built rhythms into the year through seasons and in the festivals that the Hebrew people celebrated.

In the Old Testament, God instituted a religious calendar for the Israelites to follow. Within each year, there were seven specified feasts. Basically, God asked his people to party seven times a year. Lev 23 describes this whole series of feast or parties. Many of these festivals were surrounded with singing, dancing, the best food, the best music, the best wine, and nobody worked. The last feast of the year was a knock-down, pull-out-all-the-stops camp out that went on for a week.

Jesus took this ancient idea of rhythm, reinterpreted it, embodied it in his life, and passed it on to the early church. We this in Acts 2:

*42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together*

*and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

It's clear, these little faith communities, these simple churches, had a rhythm, both in their daily lifestyle and their missional rhythms.

### Lifestyle Rhythms

The language we're using to summarize those lifestyle rhythms is BREATHE AND BLESS. Every member of the simple church is a missionary living out the BLESS rhythms of: Begin in Prayer, Listen and Engage, Eat, Serve and Story. We breathe in and breathe out prayer, that's listening prayer and missional prayer. We breathe in and breathe out relationships, we do this by listening the Word, the Spirit, and the stories of our neighbors and our neighborhood. We breathe in and breathe out meals. We do this by eating with our missional team or family and by eating with our neighbors. We breathe in and breathe out service. We let our neighbors and missional family serve us and we serve neighbors and simple church. We breathe in and breathe out stories. We breathe in by listening again to the story of our neighbors and we breathe out by sharing Jesus' story and the story of how Jesus is changing us.

### Missional Community Rhythm: 2 OUT

Another key rhythm is the 2 - 2 - 2 Rhythm. This is a monthly rhythm that guides each simple church to move forward on mission together. Here's what we want to suggest as a starting point, 2 Out, 2 Up, and 2 In.

The first rhythm is OUT. (Draw a "2". Under the two draw an arrow pointing left. Under the arrow write "Out.") This rhythm leads us to schedule intentional time to throw one party and find one time a month to serve together as a missional team. Once a month, plan a party that is an open invitation to other sojourners, the people you're investing in where you live work and play. Once a month, look for a way to serve together in your neighborhood or network. Parties and serving opportunities are always important ways to introduce people to communal life and help believers demonstrate the kingdom practically. If your missional team has discovered your specific missional calling, or if that's what drew you together in the first place, engaging together in that way will

naturally catalyze your team. For people outside of your missional team, they will see that you're more than a social club. Parties and serving often create opportunities to share the gospel story and communicate the better narrative we are inviting people to join.

This first rhythm also opens up the pathway for your missional team to engage that sense of belonging in the social space or The 72. Remember that in this space we share snapshots of who we are. Individuals in our networks or neighborhoods have a safe place to share snapshots of themselves, important details about their story, and we have the freedom to do the same about ourselves, our families and the reasons we are gathered in the neighborhood.

### Missional Community Rhythm: 2 UP

The second rhythm is UP. (Draw an x after the first "2," followed by a second "2". Under the second two draw an arrow up. Underneath the arrow write, "Up.") Twice a month, meet with your missional team. This will be a gathering of the core of your simple church. This is a time to focus the community in spiritual practices, strengthening the core through a shared meal, prayer, listening, discussing the Scriptures and serving each other, and planning for mission in your neighborhood or network (planning the Out rhythm). Eventually this gathering may grow to include more than your missional team. As it does, you will have to navigate new tensions around the numbers that are gathering in your home. Eventually you will have to make a decision about multiplication with new leaders.

You can gather with your missional team in a very low-prep way. As we go back to examine the early church rhythm, it says they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and prayer. At a minimum, missional teams should aim to gather twice a month for this purpose. This is a great environment for equipping and empowering leaders to learn and teach discipleship tools. It's an environment where accountability and encouragement can happen. Additional components may be added but devoting ourselves to the practices of "Scripture and Prayer" is critical as we look for where Jesus is at work and how we will join him.

This rhythm, in a similar way as the out rhythm does, provides a pathway for individuals to engage that sense of belonging in the personal space or The 12. Remember that in the personal space we share more openly and have greater vulnerability. We have the freedom to lift up and the freedom to challenge. In the personal space we can more easily and tangibly practice the One Anothers that we find the early church practicing.

## Missional Community Rhythm: 2 IN

The final rhythm is IN. (Draw an x after the second “2,” followed by a third “2.” Under the second two drawn an arrow toward the right. Under the arrow write, “In.”) We encourage every simple church to connect IN with the larger body of Christ, an organized church. For many who have had the framework of weekend worship experiences, this might be engaging in the Sunday morning gathering. Based on the life of each simple church, this piece may not always be practical if the communal rhythms require neighborhood engagement on Sunday mornings. Organized churches usually have many different pathways of engaging from midweek services, to weekend serve projects, and more. How you engage the larger congregation may adjust based on seasons.

Ultimately, worshiping with a Hub will be important. It will help individuals within your simple church engage that sense of belonging at the public space, or with The Crowds. This space is inspirational and reminds us that we are a part of a greater movement than what is happening in our neighborhoods or networks of relationships. We encourage each simple church to connect with an organized congregation that shares the value of a reproducing disciple-making movement.

## The Rhythm Continuum

The 2 – 2 – 2 Rhythm is on a continuum that highlights one of the core frameworks of simple churches: Hubs and Houses. Again, as we return to the Acts passage, we can see that the early church met in the temple courts and in homes. Both environments were important. At the Out end of the continuum are Houses. (Write “Houses” under “Out.”) The practices of throwing parties and serving our neighborhoods and networks, as well as the communal Up rhythms can happen in our homes. On the other end of the continuum are the Hubs. (Write “Hub” under “In.”) Every time we worship with the organized body, we are practicing the Up rhythm at a macro level and we’re reminded of the greater redemptive work occurring within the full body of Christ.

That’s the rhythm of a simple church. 2 Out (a party and a serving opportunity), 2 up (gather the missional team for spiritual encouragement and missional planning), and 2 In (connect to the larger body). Engaging 2 – 2 – 2 will create a sustainable, manageable, missional rhythm that will feed your soul, sustain your simple church, and invite sojourners to the kingdom party.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Do you currently have daily rhythms? What are they?
- Do you currently have weekly rhythms? What are they?
- Do you currently have an annual retreat or take your vacation? How do you find time each year to renew your soul?
- What’s preventing you from engaging or maintaining healthy rhythms?
- How are you (and your extended spiritual family) living the OUT rhythm? What does it look like in your neighborhood or network of relationships? Who is in your 72?
- What does your UP rhythm look like? How does your missional team gather and what are your experiences like? Who is in your 12?
- What kind of connections do you have to a larger, local hub? How often are you engaged at this level and for what purposes? Why have you chosen to be connected to this hub?



## KEY SCRIPTURES

Matthew 11:28-30  
Acts 2:42-47

### Daily

Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31  
Luke 4:42  
Luke 21:37-38

### Weekly

Exodus 20 (Sabbath Command)  
Luke 4:16

### Annually

Luke 2:41  
Exodus 12/Leviticus 23:5 (Passover)  
Leviticus 23:6 (Feast of Unleavened Bread)  
Leviticus 23:9-14 (Feast of First Fruits)  
Leviticus 23:15 (Feast of Weeks)  
Leviticus 23:23-25 (Feast of Trumpets)  
Leviticus 23:26-32 (Day of Atonement)  
Leviticus 23:33-43 (Feast of Booths/Tabernacles)

### Out

Acts 5:12  
Luke 14:15-24  
John 2:1-12  
Matthew 5:27-32  
Luke 10

### Up

Acts 2:46  
Acts 12:5, 12  
Matthew 18:20  
Hebrews 10:25  
Colossians 4:15

### In

Acts 2:1, 46  
Acts 15:30  
1 Corinthians 14:26-40  
Acts 19:9-10

Luke 22  
Luke 9  
John 15  
Matthew 28

## Discovery Bible Studies

### DBS Process (S.O.A.P.)

#### Scripture

- Read the passage
- Have someone put it in their own words

#### Observe

- What stands out to you?
- What does this text say about God?
- What does this text say about people?

#### Apply

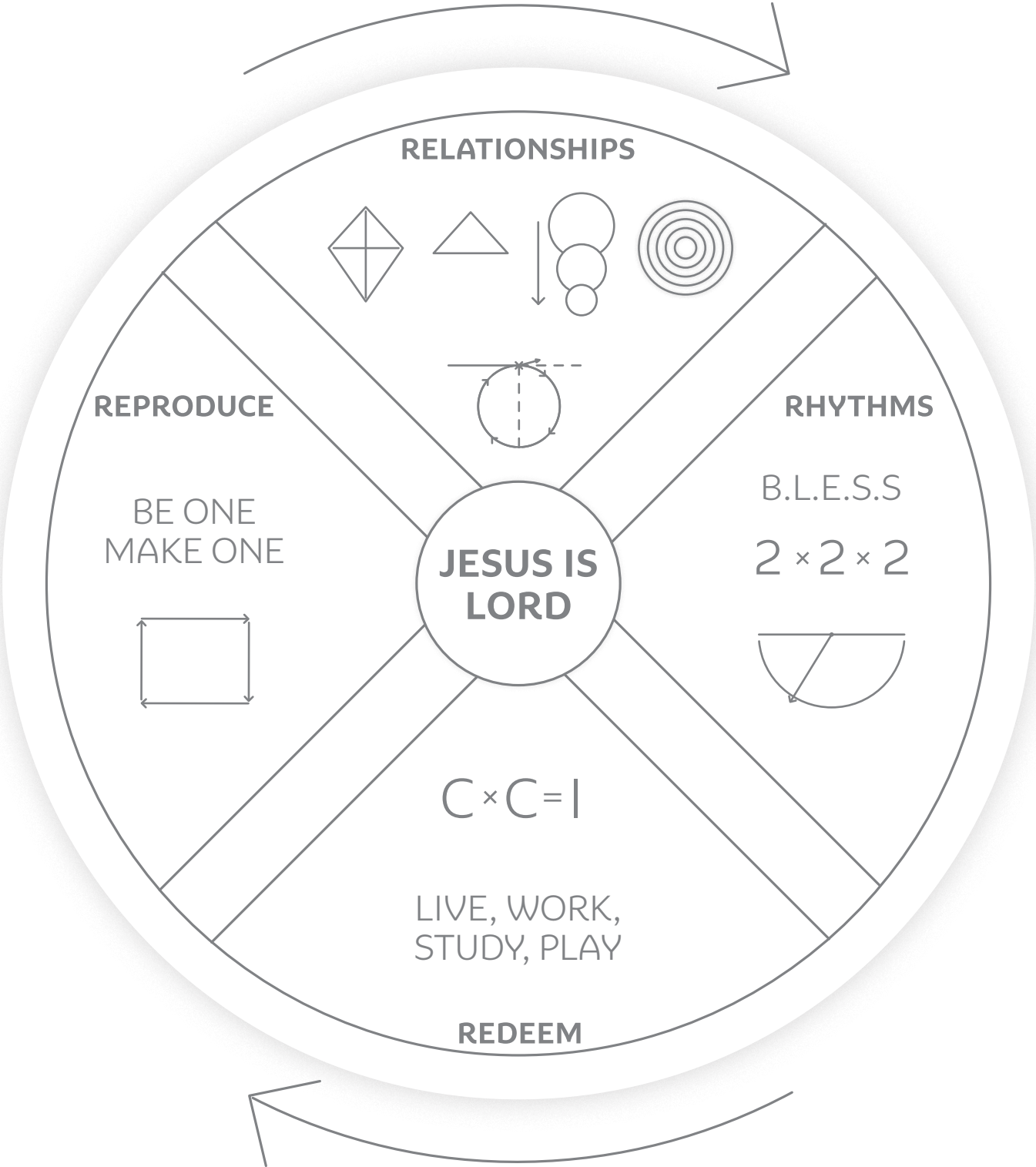
- How can you specifically live out this passage in the next few days? (Everyone creates an 'I WILL' STATEMENT)

#### Person

- Who are you going to tell about what you discovered this week?



# THE PRACTICE WHEEL Following Jesus in Practice



## BEST PRACTICES FOR USING THE PRACTICE WHEEL

- Remember this symbol is designed to be three things:

1. **A Picture to understand key ideas regarding disciple-making:**

What does this tell me about being a disciple?

2. **A Mirror to see our reflection in:**

What does this tell me about myself?

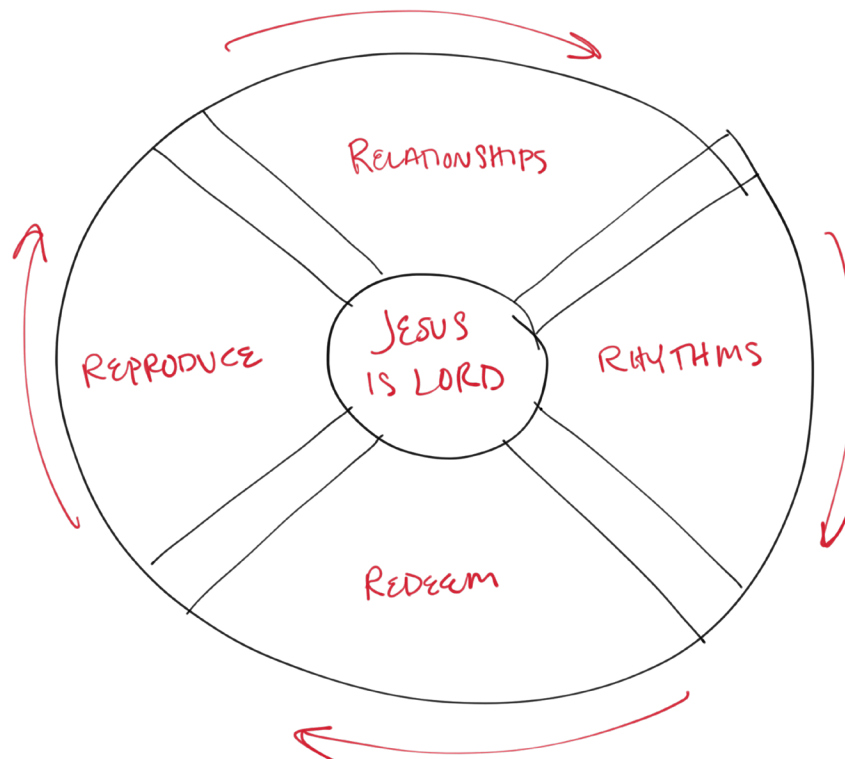
3. **A Window to look at all of life through:**

What should I do about it?

- We encourage you to read through the summaries five times before sharing it.
- Journal on the picture, mirror, and window questions above before sharing this. The degree to which you engage this symbol personally, is the degree to which you will be able to lead others into engagement.
- There are two versions included here: A four-minute summary and an extended summary.
- The main points are highlighted in teal in both versions. Commit these to memory.
- We encourage you to draw and explain the four-minute summary out loud three times before sharing it with someone else.

- When you share it with someone, draw the Practice Wheel on a napkin or sheet of paper. Leave that drawing with them.
- Remember to read the situation and the spiritual interest of the person you are sharing this with. It may be wisest to just share the brief highlight. Or if the interest is there, use the extended version, making it conversational by using the discussion questions.
- *Special Note: Unlike the other tools, this is mostly a tool you would only be sharing with someone who is quite deep in their discipleship journey, someone who is developing as a leader, who needs the big picture perspective to see the entire process and how everything fits together.*
- *Special Note: With all the other tools, we have shared extensive scriptural support and Bible passages for discovery bible study. Therefore, we do not provide passages for each of the 10 practices, but rather the 4 Master Practices that all the other practices are categorized by.*
- *Special Note: As this is a high level overview with a significant amount of content, we built the discussion questions into each section of the practice wheel, instead of collecting them all at the end.*

### THE PRACTICE WHEEL Following Jesus in Practice



## A FOUR MINUTE SUMMARY OF THE PRACTICE WHEEL

### Introduction Move #1:

#### Practice Makes Permanent

You've heard it said, "Practice makes perfect."

What's one thing that you've spent a lot of time practicing during your life? (Sport, Music, A Career Skill, etc.). What was that experiencing like?

Let me put a new spin on that old phrase, "Practice makes permanent." Practicing something regularly will make it a permanent habit, which can either benefit us or break us. Whether that's a healthy pattern or a destructive pattern, we become what we practice. Practice makes permanent!

### Introduction Move #2:

#### Jesus Gives Us a Better Way to Practice

Jesus engaged in certain practices. He would go out into creation to retreat. He would be alone with His Father in solitude to be reminded of His identity. He would immerse His mind in the scriptures to remember the Story. He would engage in multiple levels of community. He engaged in mission on purpose by living to BLESS others. In this journey, we discovered 10 different practices that are essential to following Jesus.

If Jesus felt like He needed to do these things and He was the Son of God, there's a good chance I will need to do these things also. Part of what it means to trust Jesus is to trust He actually knew how to live. That He is the master at the art of living, and we are His apprentices. Like Mr. Myogi and the Karate Kid!

Being a disciple of Jesus means following Him in Practice.

Massive positive change is possible if we **arrange our lives around those practices that Jesus arranged His life around so that we can continually receive the life and love of the Father.**

Our goal isn't to try real hard to change ourselves through will power. Rather, through practices, we stay connected to Jesus from one moment to the next. As we live connected with Jesus through practice, we will experience fundamental change through His power in us. It's like throwing up a sail and catching a wind. It's like tuning in the radio to the station and hearing music.

We've been learning so many of those practices together. We've explored following Jesus in Story, Identity, Obedience, Prayer, Rest, Transformation, Relationships, Rhythms and Reproduction.

Now we want to look at how all these practices fit together.

### The Practice Wheel

**How do we engage in practice the way Jesus did? The Practice Wheel. We will use the Practice Wheel to describe four master practices for every disciple of Jesus and every simple church: Relationships, Rhythms, Redeem and Reproduce.** All 10 practices we've learned, fit into one of these four master practices.

Practice begins with RELATIONSHIPS that create community. In that community, we practice these RHYTHMS. With these RELATIONSHIPS and RHYTHMS, we seek to join Jesus as he REDEEMS and restores the world we have been sent to. The work of redemption and restoration multiplies as disciples REPRODUCE disciples and churches reproduce churches. Relationships, Rhythms, Redeem and Reproduce. Let's walk through these to see how all these fits together.

### Wheel Section #1:

#### Relationships

In this section of the practice wheel, we learn the practices that will strengthen our relationship with God, others, and ourselves.

Four of the practices are primarily about building our relationship with God. With the **Story Diamond**, we learn how to follow Jesus in Story by engaging the Scriptures. With the **Identity Triangle**, we discover who God is and who we are. With the **Kairos Circle**, we learn the practice of following Jesus in Obedience by noticing Kairos moments and responding in obedience. With the **Prayer Circles**, we learn to use the Lord's Prayer as our pattern, we follow Jesus in Prayer by practicing listening, missional and practical prayer.

One of the practices is focused on how to order our Relationships with Others for flourishing. With The **Spheres of Influence**, we learn how to follow Jesus in Relationships, by ordering our spheres of influence the way Jesus did. Jesus had five spheres of influence. Every disciple needs all five spheres of influence to flourish. The more these spheres of influence overlap, the deeper the community in our lives.

### Wheel Section #2:

#### Rhythms

Practice begins with RELATIONSHIPS, with God and

others. In that community, we practice RHYTHMS together. Three of the practices create healthy and sustainable rhythms in our lives and simple churches. With **The Semi-Circle**, we learn to follow Jesus in Rest, by practicing Sabbath rhythms of work and rest. With the **B.L.E.S.S. Rhythms**, we learn how to follow Jesus in Rhythm by breathing in and breathing out in the five practices of B.L.E.S.S. With the **2X2X2 Rhythms**, we learn follow Jesus in Missional Community by practicing 2 outs, 2 ups, and 2 ins as a simple church and making sure our house of faith in our neighborhood stays connected to our larger Hub on a regularly basis.

### Wheel Section #3:

#### Redeem and Restore

Practice begins with RELATIONSHIPS that create community. In that community, we practice RHYTHMS. With those RELATIONSHIPS and RHYTHMS, we seek to join Jesus as he REDEEMS and restores the world we have been sent to. That work involves two practices. Through **The Impact Equation**, we learn to follow Jesus in Transformation, by partnering with the Spirit in character development and calling clarification. Secondly, we embrace the practice of missional focus. We ask every disciple to identify a primary place of missional focus: LIVE, WORK, STUDY, or PLAY, so they can live deeply among those people. **We must follow Jesus in Missional Focus where we LIVE, WORK, STUDY, and PLAY.**

That is the essence of the practice of Redeem and Restore. The Practice wheel begins with Relationships. In that community, we practice Rhythms. With those Relationships and Rhythms, we seek to REDEEM and RESTORE and finally, REPRODUCE.

### Wheel Section #4:

#### Reproduce

When it comes reproduction, every disciple is called to BE one and to MAKE one, who can also MAKE one.

If we believe that reproduction is God's will for all of us, then we will continually ask this question: Who am I investing in? REPRODUCE draws us back to the RELATIONSHIPS quadrant: Who are your 3, 12, and 72? Who are you intentionally discipling? These practices you've been living, you now share with others, so they can do the same. Which leads to the last practice. With the Leadership Square, we discovered how to follow Jesus in Reproduction, by walking with others through the four phases of leadership development.

### Closing:

#### Why a Wheel?

You may be wondering, "Why a wheel?" Firstly, this shape is a wheel because a wheel is made to keep turning repeatedly. Relationship, Rhythm, Redeem and Reproduce are an on-going, never-ending cycle. The goal of every simple church is the on-going story of reproduction - one disciple reproducing life into another, over and over again. A simple church reproducing another simple church reproducing another simple church, until we fill every neighborhood.

Secondly, this shape is a wheel because there is a hub at the center. The hub of the wheel is Jesus, his Gospel and his Lordship over our lives. Jesus is our life. He is our source. His gospel is our motivation and our means. In every part of our practice, the goal above and behind all other goals is to know Him better, to abide with Him more deeply, to rest more completely in the identity we find the Gospel, to trust more fully the sufficiency of His finished work. As that wheel spins, He is the center that holds it all together. In our relationships, in our rhythms, in mission to redeem and reproduce we are seeking to know, to abide with, and to obey Jesus.

# EXTENDED VERSION OF THE PRACTICE WHEEL

## Introduction

### Introduction Move #1:

#### Practice Makes Permanent

You've heard it said, "Practice makes perfect."

What's one thing that you've spent a lot of time practicing during your life? (Sport, Music, A Career Skill, etc.). What was that experiencing like?

Let me put a new spin on that old phrase, "Practice makes permanent." Practice never actually makes us perfect. That's not a reasonable goal. Practice doesn't make perfect, practice makes permanent. Practice makes us better at what we are practicing. Practicing something regularly will make it a permanent habit, which can either benefit us or break us. Neurological studies have demonstrated that practicing something regularly permanently changes the neurological pathways in our brain. Whether that's healthy pattern or a destructive pattern, we become what we practice. Practice makes permanent!

Discussion:

- What are practices that are helpful in your life?
- What are some practice you'd like to change?

### Introduction Move #2:

#### Jesus Gives Us a Better Way to Practice

Jesus engaged in certain practices. He would go out into creation to retreat. He would be alone with His Father in solitude to be reminded of His identity. He would immerse His mind in the scriptures to remember the Story. He would engage in multiple levels of community. He engaged in mission on purpose by living to BLESS others. He would give and live simply. He would engage in acts of servanthood all the time. The list goes on...

Now, if Jesus felt like He needed to do these things and He was the Son of God, there's a good chance I will need to do these things also. Part of what it means to trust Jesus is to trust He actually knew how to live. That He is the master at the art of living, we are His apprentices. Like Mr. Myogi and the Karate Kid! Being a disciple of Jesus means following Him in Practice.

Massive positive change is possible if you're willing to do one thing. The one thing is: **To arrange our lives around those practices that Jesus arranged His life around so that we would continually be receiving life and love from the Father.**

So, if Jesus is present to me all the time, my goal isn't to try real hard to change myself, all by myself. Rather, through practices, I stay connected to Jesus from one moment to the next. As I live connected with Jesus through practice, I will experience fundamental change through His power in me. It's like throwing up a sail and catching a wind. It's like tuning in the radio to the station and hearing music.

We've been learning so many of those practices together:

Following Jesus in Story by engaging the Scriptures,

Following Jesus in Identity by resting in the who God is and who we are in Christ,

Following Jesus in Obedience by noticing Kairos moments and responding in obedience,

Following Jesus in Prayer by practicing listening, missional and practical prayer,

Following Jesus in Rest, by practicing Sabbath rhythms of work and rest,

Following Jesus in Transformation, by learning to partner with the Spirit in character development and calling clarification,

Following Jesus in Relationships, by ordering our spheres of influence the way Jesus did,

Following Jesus in Rhythm by breathing in and breathing out in the five practices of B.L.E.S.S.,

Following Jesus in Missional Community by practicing 2 outs, 2 ups, and 2 ins with our household and Hub.

Following Jesus in Reproduction, by walking with others through the four phases of leadership development.

That's ten in all. Now we want to look at how all these practices fit together. Think of each of these practices like a tool, now we want to look at the toolbox they go in and where each tool goes in the tool box. How do all the practices become a way of life?

**How do we engage in practice the way Jesus did? The Practice Wheel.**

We will use the Practice Wheel to describe four master practices for every disciple of Jesus and every simple church: Relationships, Rhythms, Redeem and Reproduce. All 10 practices we've learned, fit into one of these four master practices.

Practice begins with RELATIONSHIPS that create community. In that community, we practice these RHYTHMS. With these RELATIONSHIPS and RHYTHMS, we seek to join Jesus as he REDEEMS and restores the world we have been sent to. The work of redemption and restoration multiplies as disciples REPRODUCE disciples and churches reproduce churches.

Relationships, Rhythms, Redeem and Reproduce. Let's walk through these to see how all these practices work together.

### Wheel Section #1: Relationships

In this section of the practice wheel, we learn the practices that will strengthen our relationship with God, others, and ourselves.

#### Relationship with God.

Four of the practices are primarily about building our relationship with God.

**The Story Diamond:** We follow Jesus in Story by engaging the Scriptures. It's through the Scriptures that we discover what God has done, what God is doing, and what God will do. It's the great Story of Creation, Fall, Redemption and Restoration. We find the better Story we can live in. It's called the Gospel and it's good news for the whole world!

**The Identity Triangle:** Through the Story, we also discover who God is and who we are. That empowers us to follow Jesus in Identity. Once we know who God is and who we are in Christ, we are empowered to work from a place of rest in God's grace and goodness, not our own striving.

**The Kairos Circle:** Loving Jesus means obeying Jesus. We only grow in our relationship with God by acting on what we have learned. We follow Jesus in Obedience by noticing Kairos moments and responding in obedience, repent and believe.

**The Prayer Circles:** Prayer is another fundamental practice to communing with Jesus. It's meant to be a dialogue, not just a monologue. Using the Lord's Prayer as our pattern, we follow Jesus in Prayer by practicing listening, missional and practical prayer.

#### Discussion:

- Tell me about your current practices in this area?
- How is it with your soul and your relationships with Jesus?

- Which of these practices are humming for you? Which needs work?

#### Relationships with Others.

**The Spheres of Influence:** We follow Jesus in Relationships, by ordering our spheres of influence the way Jesus did. Jesus had 1, 3, 12, 72 and the crowds. The 1 was His father, where He found His identity and destiny. The 3 were Peter, James, and John, the place for intimacy and transparency. The 12 was his team, where there was support, challenge and closeness. The 72 were his tribe, his extended family on mission. The crowds included 100s or 1000's that were inspired and celebrated in a shared experience. **Every disciple needs all five spheres of influence to flourish. The more these spheres of influence overlap, the deeper the benefit in our lives.** The combination of the 1, 3, 12, and 72 are the making of our simple churches, extended spiritual families built around Jesus and his mission. The crowds include our intentional connection to the Hub of a larger, organized church.

#### Discussion:

- Fill in these spheres of influence for me. Who are 3, 12, and 72?
- How well are you overlapping these circles in your life?

### Wheel Section #2: Rhythms

Practice begins with RELATIONSHIPS, with God and others. In that community, we practice RHYTHMS together. We've learned three practices that create healthy and sustainable rhythms in our lives and simple churches.

**The Semi-Circle:** We follow Jesus in Rest, by practicing Sabbath rhythms of work and rest. We divert daily, withdraw weekly, and abandon annually.

**B.L.E.S.S. Rhythms:** We follow Jesus in Rhythm by breathing in and breathing out in the five practices of B.L.E.S.S. We **Begin in Prayer**, by breathing in and breathing out prayer. We **Listen and Engage**, by breathing in the stories of our neighbors and neighborhood, then breathing out by engaging relationships with them. We **Eat!** We breathe in meals by eating with our simple church and breathing out meals by eating with our neighbors. We **Serve**. We breathe in by receiving the service of our neighbors and breathe out by serving our neighbors. We **Share** by breathing in the stories of neighbors and breathing out the Gospel and the story of how Jesus has changed our lives.



**2X2X2 Rhythms:** We follow Jesus in Missional Community by practicing 2 Outs, 2 Ups, and 2 Ins as a simple church. 2 times a month we plan for “Out.” The first Out focuses on serving our neighborhood and the second Out on an inclusive social event we can invite neighbors to. 2 times a month we plan for “Up.” The “Up’s” are where we gather our missional team twice per month for a meal, discipleship, and planning for mission (the Outs). The missional team includes everyone who is following Jesus and owning mission in your neighborhood. 2 times a month we plan for “In.” The “In’s” is where our Household of faith in the neighborhood intentional connects with our Hub, the larger, more organized church. The early church met in the Temple Courts and Homes, Hubs and Houses, so do we! We are better together!

#### Discussion:

- How are your work and rest rhythms? In sync or out? How so?
- How are your BLESS rhythms? How well are your breathing in and breathing out B.L.E.S.S.ing?
- How are you 2X2X2 rhythms? What is strongest...Up, In, or Out? Why? What needs the most attention?

#### Wheel Section #3: Redeem and Restore

Practice begins with RELATIONSHIPS that create community. In that community, we practice RHYTHMS. With those RELATIONSHIPS and RHYTHMS, we seek to join Jesus as he REDEEMS and restores the world we have been sent to.

In our simple churches, our goal is to join Jesus in his mission to redeem and restore our neighborhood or network. That work involves two practices we have learned together.

**The Impact Equation:** Character X Calling = Impact. We follow Jesus in Transformation, by learning to partner with the Spirit in character development and calling clarification. The work of redemption and restoration must start in me. As I grow in Character and Calling, my Impact increases. God must do something in me before He does something through me.

**Missional Focus:** We must follow Jesus in Missional Focus where we LIVE, WORK, STUDY, and PLAY. We ask every disciple to identify a primary place of missional focus: LIVE, WORK, STUDY, or PLAY, so they can live deeply among those people. None of us can

reach everyone, but all of us can reach someone. We each must answer the question, **“TO WHOM HAS GOD UNIQUELY SENT ME? WHERE AM I “ONE OF?”** We don’t just visit the people God sends us to; we become “one of.” Who are you called to live with, love, serve, suffer with, and even, if need be, die for?

#### Discussion:

- Fill in the Impact Equation for yourself right.
- How might you best partner with the Spirit to take your next step in Character and Calling?
- To whom as God uniquely sent you? How deeply are you living as “one of” among them?
- What is your primary place of sentness? Live, work, study, or play? Describe your context.

That is the essence of the practice of Redeem and Restore. The Practice wheel begins with Relationships. In that community, we practice Rhythms. With those Relationships and Rhythms, we seek to REDEEM and RESTORE and finally, REPRODUCE.

#### Wheel Section #4: Reproduce

Jesus has invited us into the reproduction of life. **Implicit in the command, “Go make disciples,” is the intent that every disciple be a disciple who can make disciples.** Jesus designed the Church to be a living, thriving, reproducing organism that allows life-in-the-Spirit to spread virally from one disciple to the next. Jesus compared it to the life of a seed (Mark 4) that brings forth 30, 60, or 100-fold reproduction. Imagine living a life where at the end you could say, “My life reproduced 30, 60 or 100 disciples?” Those disciples collect into simple churches. We make disciples that make disciples that plant simple churches that make disciples that make disciples that plant simple churches...

When it comes to disciples...everyone is called to BE one and to MAKE one, who can MAKE one.

Be one and Make one, who can also Make one. That leads to this reproduction question, **“WHO AM I INVESTING IN?”** If we believe that reproduction is God’s will for all of us, then we will continually ask this question: Who am I investing in? REPRODUCE draws us back to the RELATIONSHIPS quadrant (Draw the curved arrow from the REPRODUCE to the RELATIONSHIPS section). Who are my 3, 12, and 72? Who am I intentionally discipling? All of these practices we’ve been living, we share with others, so they can do the



same. Which leads to the last practice...

**The Leadership Square:** We follow Jesus in Reproduction, by walking with others through the four phases of leadership development. Phase one: I do, you watch. Phase two: I do, you help. Phase three: You do, I help. Phase four: You do, I watch. Each phase requires a different type of leadership, starting with a very directive, hands-on approach and moving toward a celebratory, hands-off approach. The disciple is moving from unconscious incompetence toward unconscious competence.

#### Discussion:

- Who are you investing in?
- Which of the discipleship tools are you focusing on with them?
- Where are they at in the four phases of development? How can you help them take their next step?

#### Closing:

##### Why a Wheel?

Firstly, this shape is a wheel because a wheel is made to keep turning repeatedly.

Relationship, Rhythm, Redeem and Reproduce are an on-going, never-ending cycle. The goal of every simple church is the on-going story of reproduction. One disciple reproducing life into another, over and over again. A simple church reproducing another simple church reproducing another simple church, until we fill every neighborhood.

Secondly, this shape is a wheel because there is a hub at the center. The hub of the wheel is Jesus, his Gospel and his Lordship over our lives. Paul said I consider everything else rubbish compared to the surpassing greatness of know Jesus. Sounds like something a snobbish brit might say, "That's rubbish!" The Greek word is translated as "rubbish," but many a scholar has noted that it is far too polite of a translation. It's been scrubbed a bit. To convey the crudity of the word, we'd have to write a word that we'd rather not! (Theological Lexicon of the New Testament)

Paul is saying you can put everything on this side of the scale and Jesus on the other. All of that, in comparison to Jesus is ... That's how much we need Him.

Jesus is our life. He is our source. His gospel is our motivation and our means. In every part of our practice, the goal above and behind all of the practices is to know Him better, to abide with Him more deeply, to rest more completely in the identity we find the Gospel, and to trust more fully the sufficiency of His finished work. As that wheel spins, He is the center that holds it all together. The is the most important piece of the practice wheel. In our relationships, in our rhythms, in mission to redeem and reproduce we are seeking to know, to abide with, and to obey Jesus.

## Discovery Bible Studies

### Relationships:

Matthew 22:37-39

Philippians 3:7-14

John 13:34-35

1 John 4:7-16

John 15:12-13

### Rhythms:

Acts 2:42-47

Acts 4:32-37

Hebrews 10:19-25

Romans 16:1-5

### Redeem/Restore

John 1:14

John 20:21

Luke 4:17-21

Galatians 5:16-25

1 Corinthians 12

### Reproduce

Matthew 28:18-20

2 Timothy 2:2, 1 Corinthians 11:1

Mark 4:1-20

Luke 22:24-27

1 Thessalonians 2:7-12

### DBS Process (S.O.A.P.)

#### Scripture

- Read the passage
- Have someone put it in their own words

#### Observe

- What stands out to you?
- What does this text say about God?
- What does this text say about people?

#### Apply

- How can you specifically live out this passage in the next few days? (Everyone creates an 'I WILL' STATEMENT)

#### Person

- Who are you going to tell about what you discovered this week?

