



Week 5: January 6-13 (START OF THE SPRING SEASON FOR GROUP)

Introduce Guests/Share Life: *How has this week been going? Good? Bad? Ugly? Things to celebrate?*

Open in Prayer: *Include any prayer needs that came up while you were sharing life together.*

Recall the Guidelines: *Ask: "What is the purpose of the guidelines?" Answer: To be relational!*

Share the Vision: *This small group is a discipleship group. Our primary goal is to equip you to be a disciple who makes disciples of Jesus. Everything we do in this group is reproducible so you can do it with others.*

Hook Question: What has been your greatest loss in life up to this point? How has this loss changed you?

Ask someone from your team to read or tell the following background for the story:

One of the most prominent themes in the Bible is the concept of *redemption*. To redeem something literally means to restore something that has been broken. Throughout Scripture, God reveals Himself as *Redeemer*. It is who He is. It is part of His nature.

We all need redemption. The greatest need of any person is to be redeemed from sin and its consequences and restored back to God. God made a way for our redemption by sending His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. Jesus has visibly demonstrated God's nature and His redeeming power. Apart from Jesus we were lost. Because of Jesus we are found. Apart from Jesus we were dead. Because of Jesus we are alive. Apart from Jesus we were orphans. Because of Jesus we are adopted sons and daughters of the Most High God. God has redeemed us. What was lost in sin has been restored in Jesus. He is our Redeemer.

Even when we have received God's redemption from sin we still experience brokenness in this life. This world is under the curse of sin and sin's consequences. Because of that, we still experience loss – even as followers of Jesus. The Bible paints a picture of God's great and final redemption for all believers that will happen one day in heaven. He has redeemed us all and He will redeem everything that was lost.

Redemption doesn't always mean we get back exactly what we had. God promises that He will redeem us by giving us something greater than we have ever experienced before. This is the hope of heaven. This is who God is. He is our Redeemer. In today's story, Jesus is with His disciples. What Jesus does in this story was a miracle with a temporary resolution. However, this story is a foreshadowing of God's power over sin and death and His ability to redeem. With the theme of redemption in our hearts, this is where our story begins...

Tell the story from Luke 7:11-17: *Use different storytellers. Teach people to share God's Word with others!*

Rebuild the story: *Group members retell the story based on what they remember.*

Read the story from Luke 7:11-17: *Ask the group to read these verses.*

Discussion Questions: learn to talk about God's Word with others...

Head
Questions:
Quicker
tempo.

- What did Jesus redeem in this story? Why do you think He did that?
- What does this story teach us about people?
- What does this story teach us about God?

Heart & Hand
Questions:
Slow down &
wait!

- What has been broken in your life that you would like God to restore?
 - What is your part as you seek God and trust Him to redeem what has been lost in your life?
- What do you think God is trying to show you right now? How do you need to change?
- Who could retell the story for us right here one last time?

Thank your storyteller for sharing the Word. Ask for a volunteer storyteller for next week.

Close in prayer.



Week 5: Desiring God

Quadrant Four: Disciple

The ultimate mark of spiritual maturity is becoming a spiritual parent. A spiritual parent is someone who is able to reproduce disciples who make disciples of Jesus. Spiritual parents understand that spiritual maturity is not purity for purity's sake, or holiness for holiness's sake, or knowledge for knowledge's sake. Spiritual parents practice what God commands because they know that it is essential to their mission to be a disciple who makes disciples.

Spiritual Parent:

Disciple-makers. Understand the process of spiritual growth (all four quadrants) and how to help people mature spiritually. Intentional about discipling others. Discipleship is their primary purpose in life. Their greatest goal is to reproduce more disciple-makers (spiritual parents).

What do spiritual parents need? Spiritual parents need to learn the discipleship process (the discipleship wheel) inside and out. They need to become an apprentice to a more mature disciple-maker who will help them learn to disciple others. Finally, they need opportunities to be released to disciple others alone. (Note: Not "alone" as in without a team! Even spiritual parents need to work under God-given authority and as a team with His Church. By "alone" we mean that they are able to lead others in discipleship without constant supervision.)

In the SCMD process, "D" stands for "Disciple." What is the goal in discipleship?

In Ephesians 4:11-16, Paul said,

"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ..."

Let's get something straight, here. A believer does not have to become a spiritual parent before they can engage others in discipleship – and they should NOT wait. Every Christian can disciple another person up to where they are in their own journey. In fact, spiritual growth is always stunted when believers are not actively practicing discipleship with others. We all need to disciple as part of a team (in small group) and with others one-to-one as God leads.

"D" (Disciple) defines the spiritual parent quadrant because the greatest need of a spiritual parent is to lead others in discipleship. Fully mature believers lead others in discipleship. Period. Every time. No exceptions. You are not fully mature in Christ unless you are leading others in discipleship. Wrestle with that biblical reality in your heart right now.

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The job of pastors and church leaders is not to do all the discipleship. Their job is to equip the church to disciple, to set the example in their own discipleship of others, and to unleash the church as a powerful force for Christ in the world. Pastors cannot disciple everyone, nor does God expect them to! God expects His Church to become equipped to make disciples of Jesus.

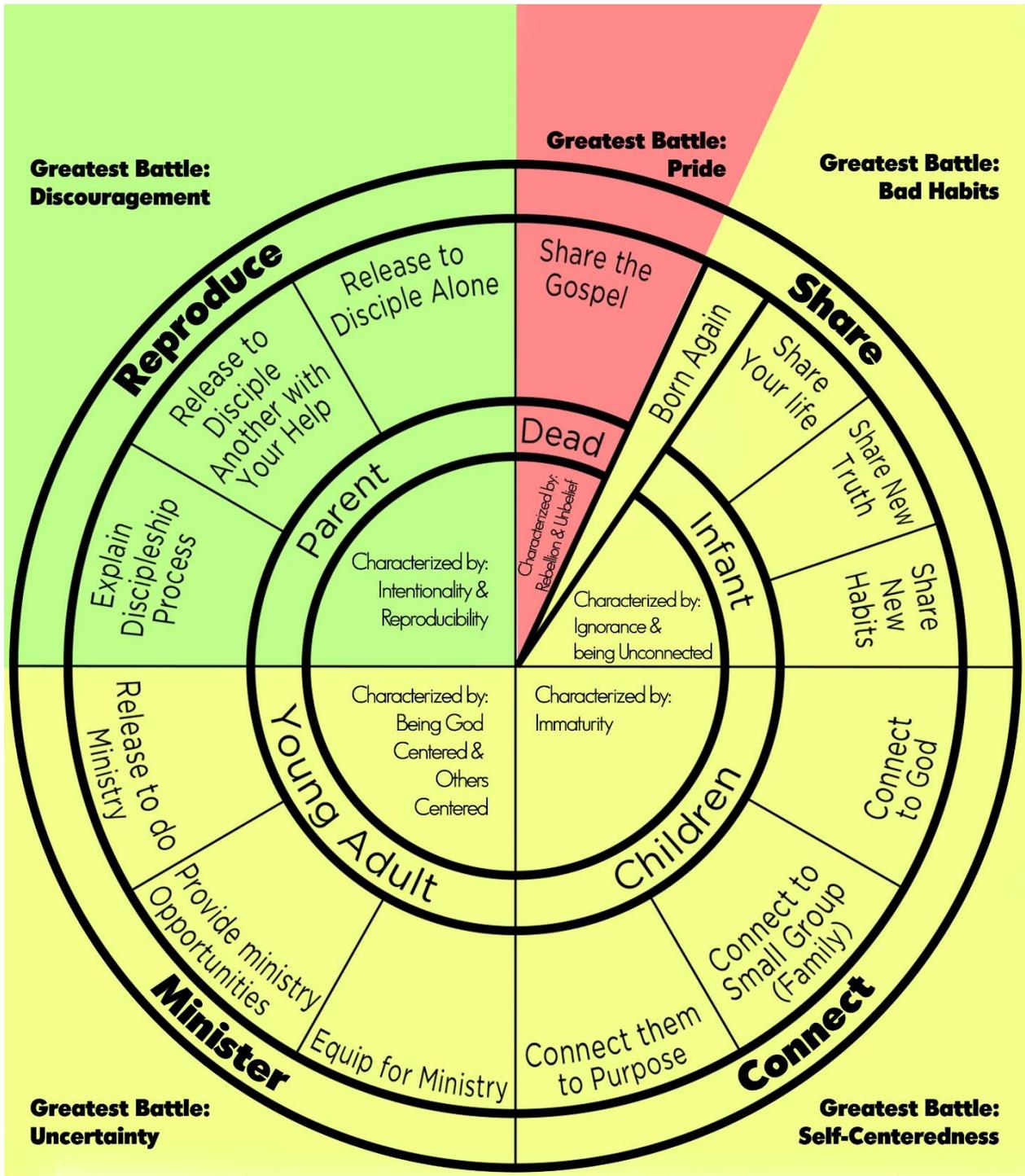
This is why all of our small groups are discipleship groups. The goal of every small group is to equip others to make disciples. Everything we do in small group is reproducible. Being relational, asking good questions, sharing stories from God's Word, being transparent... anyone can learn how to do this. Anyone can become equipped to make disciples of Jesus.

That is why we cast vision at the beginning of every group meeting (go look at the lesson guide to see what I'm talking about). This is a critical part of small group. Unless we tell our group members why we are doing what we are doing they won't know. We must help them understand that the goal of small group is to make disciples who make disciples of Jesus.

Spiritual parents are defined by reproduction. They are intentional about it. They need to disciple others. They need to raise up leaders who will reproduce discipleship. Are you a spiritual parent? If not, what do you need to do to finish your training and grow up spiritually?

1. Continue making disciples (if we are not practicing discipleship we are not growing)
2. Talk to your coach or small group leader (be humble and transparent and ask for help)
3. Pray and read God's Word (trust the Holy Spirit to change you into the image of Jesus)

(Discipleship wheel on the next page...)



Light Green: Able to reproduce Discipleship Leaders

Light Yellow: Equipped by the Spirit to engage others in the Discipleship Process

Pink: Able to use influence to impact others.