



SGL BRIEFING

Getting ready for Deployment

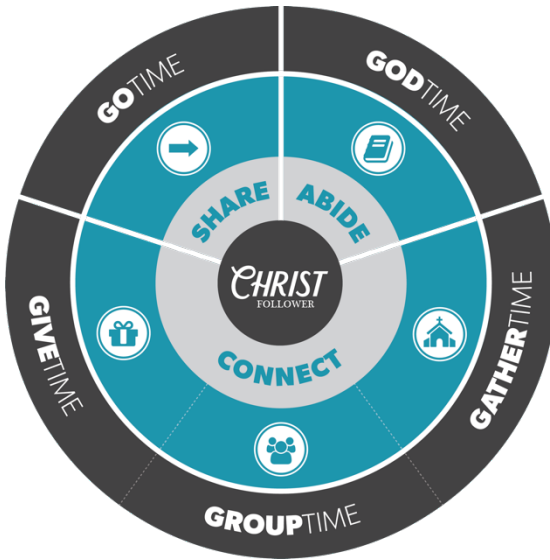


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Preface

2 You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus,² and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.³ Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.⁴ No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

2 Tim 2:1-4

SG leading is not easy! Thankfully, you aren't going to get thrown into the battlefield alone! This short briefing serves as a mission brief before deployment. We'll try to cover everything you need to know to effectively be deployed as small groups.

Look around you. These are the future SGLs you'll be deploying with. Let's start get started.

SESSION 1
**THE PROFILE OF THE
DISCIPLE-MAKING
GROUP**

PART 1: CORE VISION

True Biblical Community is the Antidote to Life-threatening Sin

“Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

Hebrews 3:12-13

Why do small groups exist? Heb 3:12-13.

Small Groups have 2 distinctive NON-NEGOTIABLES:

1. **MUTUAL MINISTRY** – Small groups are not about self-focused, one-way taking; they are about but others-focused, mutual giving to ONE ANOTHER.

For I long to see you...that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine

Rom 1:11-12

2. **MULTIPLICATION** – Small groups are not about maintaining the status quo, but multiplying by disciples by teaching and entrusting the gospel

And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

2 Tim 2:2

Importantly, these two small group non-negotiables are reflected in our small group commitment.

SMALL GROUP COMMITMENT

Non-negotiable #1: Mutual Ministry

- **We all belong to one another (Rom 12:5).** Therefore, I will take ownership of my small group. I will attend my group consistently and frequently. When I am away or late, I will inform my group in advance.
- **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another” (Col 3:16).** I will come to my small group meeting prepared and ready to share God’ word with my fellow group members.
- **“Stir up one another on toward love and good works” (Heb 10:24).** I will be accountable to the group concerning my spiritual goals and will keep my fellow group members accountable concerning theirs.
- **Sin is deceitfully hardening (Heb 3:13).** Therefore, I will be transparent and vulnerable with my small group regarding my sins and struggles. Concurrently, I will help create a safe place for each member to share with no judgments attached.
- **Gossip and slander erode trust and poison the soul (Prov 26:22).** Therefore, I will strive to maintain confidentiality of the personal information that is shared within my small group. I understand my Small Group Leader reserves the right to contact the Coach, Pastors or Elders if there is a situation that he/she doesn't know how to handle, a person is being harmed, or if there is ongoing unrepentant sin.

Non-negotiable #2: Multiplication

- **“Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19).** I will commit to a small group which is open to new members and as it grows we will multiply to further God’s work. If I can no longer attend my group consistently, I will avail my spot to others and explore other group discipleship options at Hope Church Toronto West.
- **My leaders must give an account to God (Heb 13:17).** I will pray for and submit to the direction of the Pastors, Elders and Directors of Hope Church Toronto West. I will attend the monthly church-wide prayer meeting to pray for gospel advance in our church, city, country and beyond.

PART 2: THREE CORE ELEMENTS

I. THE WORD – The SWORD of the Spirit

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Heb 4:12

Practical Principles:

1. **WORD-CENTRED: Prepare beforehand by filling up with God’s word**
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Col 3:16

Bible Study 101:

- OBSERVATION – What does the text say?
- INTERPRETATION – What does the text mean? What was the author’s intent?
- APPLICATION – What does the text mean for my life?

What-NOT-to-do: Ask “What does this text mean to you?”

The meaning of the text is not dictated by our subjective, human interpretation, but by God’s objective, divine intent.

2. **DISCUSSION-BASED: Ask Good Questions**

The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.

Prov 20:5

Marks of a good question¹:

- Simplicity
- Clarity
- Urgency

¹ See the Appendix 1 for “10 ways to tank your small group discussion”

3. **APPLICATION-DRIVEN**: Be doers, not just hearers of God’s word

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. **23** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.

24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.

James 1:22-24

4. **MEDITATION-SATURATED**: Talk to your heart in the presence of others

1 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

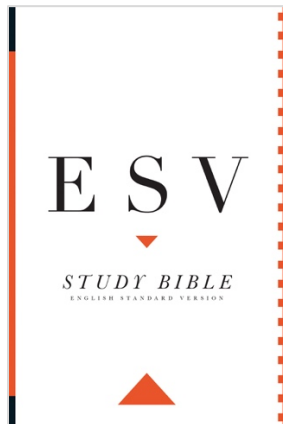
2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,

Ps 103:1-2

Meditation 101:

- **ADORE** – What does the text show me about God for which I could praise and thank him?
- **ADMIT** – What does the text show me about myself for which I should repent?
- **ASPIRE** – What does the text show me about life that I could aspire to, ask for, and act on?²

Resource Highlight:



² Adore, Admit, Aspire is adapted from “The Songs of Jesus” by Tim Keller

II. PRAYER – The POWER of the Spirit

¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

Eph 6:17-18

a. SCRIPTURE-fed

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

John 15:7

b. SPIRIT-led

For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

1 Cor 2:10b

c. WORSHIP-based

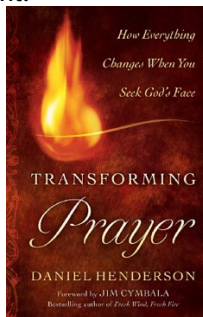
And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Heb 11:6

Prayer Method 101³: 2/2 pattern of prayer (Matt 6)

He is WORTHY (v9-10)! I am NEEDY (v11-13)

Resource Highlight:



³ See Appendix 2 for practical tools to leading and experiencing life-giving prayer times

III. ACCOUNTABILITY – Mutual CONFESSION leading to increased OBEDIENCE

Culture of

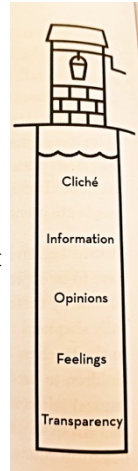
a. Deep VULNERABILITY

The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.

Prov 20:5

Sample questions⁴:

1. Is your conscience growing tenderer to convict you of the very first motions of sin in the mind?
2. Do you see signs of growth in the fruit of the Spirit?
3. Are you coming to discern false, idolatrous motives for some of the good service you do?



b. Desperate PRAYER

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart!

Try me and know my thoughts!

²⁴ And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

Psalms 139:23-24

c. Mournful CONFESSION

And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

Is 6:5

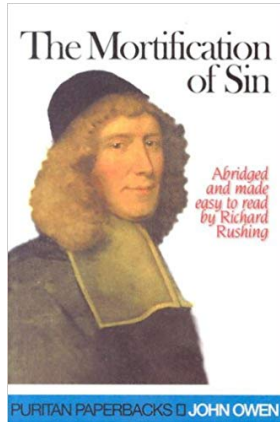
⁴ See Appendix 3 for the expanded list of questions

d. **MUTUAL** confession

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

James 5:16

Resource Highlight:



Examine the sample small group night below:

Sample Small Group Night

7:00 to 7:15pm - Arrive and CONNECT

7:15 to 7:45 pm - Worship and PRAY

7:45 to 8:30 pm - Discuss God's WORD

8:30 to 9:15pm - Break Out for ACCOUNTABILITY

Each section of the night upholds a different core element. How would the disciples in the group be affected if the ACCOUNTABILITY section were removed consistently? How about the WORD section? How about the Worship and PRAY section?

Although we strive for consistency, we are on guard against unfruitful rigidity. In what way could it be wisely strategic to emphasize select sections on select nights?

SESSION 2
**THE PROFILE OF THE
DISCIPLE-MAKING
LEADER**

The Disciple-maker is called to the 3C'S:

1. Earnest **CONVICTION**
2. Godly **CHARACTER**
3. Growing **COMPETENCE**

I. Earnest **CONVICTION**

I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, ²⁶the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me

Col 1:28-29

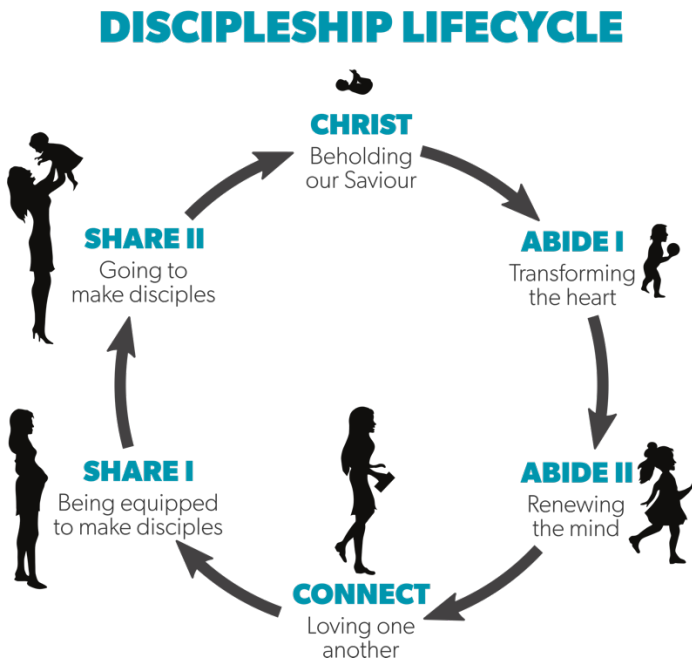
1. **ONE MISSION** – Proclaim Christ.
...[Christ] we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom...
2. **ONE END** – Maturity.
...that we may present everyone mature in Christ...
3. **ONE ENDURANCE** - Toil
...For this I toil, struggling...
4. **ONE POWER** – Christ's power in us
...with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.
5. **ONE MOTIVATION** – Christ in us, the hope of glory.

I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, ²⁶the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸Him we proclaim...

6. ONE OPTION – Mature or be stunted.

¹¹About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. ¹²For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, ¹³for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. ^{6:1}Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God

Heb 5:11-6:1



II. Growing **COMPETENCE**

Jesus was PERFECTLY COMPETENT in 3 offices:

1. **PROPHET**

- a. He spoke truth from his own authority (Matt 5:28-29)
- b. He was God's very word made flesh (John 1:14)

2. **PRIEST**

- a. He is the holy, unstained high priest who offers the sacrifice for us (Heb 7:26)
- b. He doesn't just offer the sacrifice; He IS the sacrifice (Heb 7:27)

3. **KING**

- a. He is the victorious king who has won the victory on our behalf (Col 2:15)
- b. He sits at the right hand of God (Eph 1:20-23)

Because we are united to Christ, we share this 3-fold office:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

1 Pet 2:9

—

The Spirit equips every believer to be a prophet who brings the truth, a priest who sympathetically serves, and a king who calls others into accountable love — even if he or she lacks specialized gifts for office or full-time ministry. This Spirit-equipped calling and gifting of every believer to be a prophet, priest, and king has been called the "general office."⁵

—

Put another way, every believer has a 3-fold role:

ROLE	TASK	AIM
Teacher	Bring the truth	Get to CHRIST
Shepherd	Sympathetically serve	Get to the HEART ⁶
Leader	Call others into accountable love	Get to ACTION

⁵ Excerpted from "Center Church" by Tim Keller

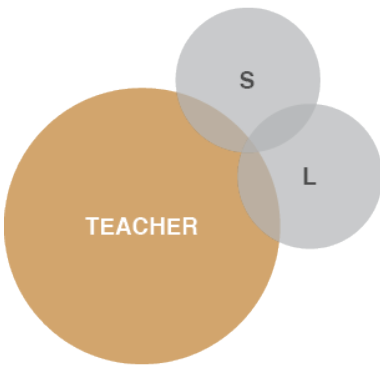
⁶ See Appendix 4 for important principles in shepherding for heart change.

Understanding our leanings...

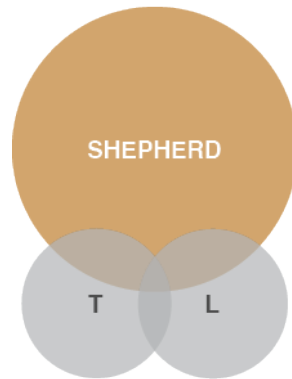
A healthy disciple-maker has a healthy balance of all three roles. List these three roles in order of strength to weakness in your life:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

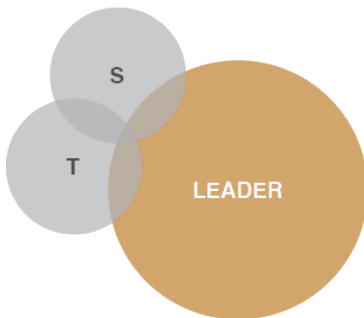
The Need for Balance...



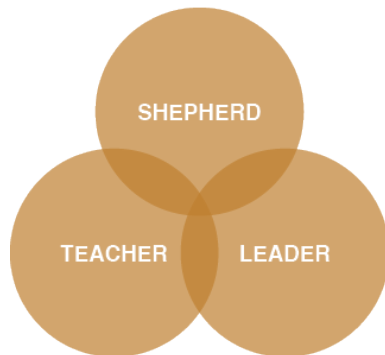
BIBLE STUDY



SUPPORT GROUP



FAN CLUB



CHRIST-LIKE BALANCE

III. Godly CHARACTER

*But this is the one to whom I will look:
he who is humble and contrite in spirit
and trembles at my word.*

- Is 66:2b -

1. The true disciple-maker is HUMBLE

Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

1 Pet 5:5b

2. The true disciple-maker FEARS GOD

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

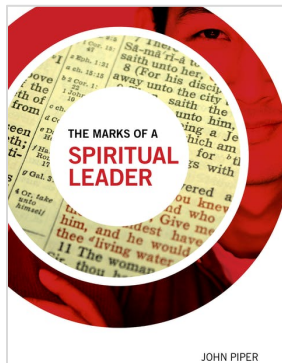
John 15:5

3. Humility and fear of God are produced only by an apprehension of JESUS CHRIST

“He must increase, but I must decrease.”

John 3:30

Resource Highlight:



APPENDIX

Appendix 1: 10 ways to tank your small group discussion

1. Lecture your group instead of facilitate a discussion with your group.
2. Follow your notes like a script– ask every question on your list.
3. Don't prepare for your Small Group hoping "What were your thoughts on chapter 6?" will suffice.
4. Ask only "yes" or "no" questions.
5. The-run-on-sentence-question-that-is-really-more-of-a-statement- than-a-question-therefore-no-one- knows-how-to-respond-to-your- rambling-unfocused-pseudo- question.
6. Answer your own questions.
7. Expect everyone to answer every question.
8. Focus only on the meaning of a passage or statements by an author and never get to personal application throughout the discussion.
9. Allow someone to dominate the discussion or hi-jack the direction.
10. Lose track of time and go on and on and on.

Reflect and Discuss:

Which of these have you experienced in a group setting before? Explain.

Circle two or three areas which you can grow in.

Appendix 2: Practical Principles for leading life-giving prayer times⁷

1. Flow (ABC)

- ABC - Audible, Brief, Clear
- Audible: Loud enough that I can hear you.
 - It's no point for you to open your mouth if we can't hear you.
 - If the Spirit is prompting you to pray, he is doing it for the benefit of all, not just one.
 - Maybe your prayer will prompt me to pray something I wouldn't have thought of otherwise
 - Maybe your prayer will prompt me to agree
 - Another reason: praying is a window into the soul, so it allows us to know people's heart. Prayer together rebuilds trust. Specificity breed authenticity.
- Brief: Short enough that we can stay awake.
 - Qn: What do you do with long-winded people? Ans: Diffuse it before they use it. Tell people up front to pray short prayers. Say, "In one sentence or two, pray this way".
 - Short prayers allow others to participate
 - You may have to take people aside offline to serve others
- Clear: Clear enough that we can focus and agree
 - Pray for one thing or focus at a time.
 - If you pray about 30 things, then it confuses

⁷ Adapted from Daniel Henderson's "How to experience and lead life-giving prayer times." Watch the videos at <https://hopegroups.ca/life-giving-prayer-times/>

2. Freedom (Expression)

- Perhaps the worst practical way to pray is to “fold hands and bow heads”
- Biblical and practical alternative: “Stand up, lift up your eyes and raise your hands”
- Forms not rigid or legalistic. Give people permission to exercise freedom in physical posture of prayer.
- Illustration: Different ways in which our children express affection to us. Glory in fatherhood is found in diversity of love expression.
- Walk, kneel, stand...
- Also helps us to stay awake

3. Flexibility (Sensitivity)

- Have a plan, but in the moment, be sensitive.
- Prepare, but hold it loosely.
- It’s the Lord’s prayer time, not ours. Sometimes, he will shift the focus from what you originally planned.

4. Faithfulness (Life-long)

- Not a flavour of the month, theme of the year, etc...
- We must continue to pursue this for the rest of our lives.
- Our motivation must be rooted in that which never changes. What is that? GOD IS WORTHY TO BE SOUGHT.
- Most of the time, we won’t feel like praying
- However, develop a dream of dying on your knees

Helpful tips:

1. Allow flexibility in participation

- Praying out loud
 - “If you don’t feel comfortable praying out loud, just be blessed by those who do. Listen in. Listen to the group beside you.”
- Pray alone or with the person you came with

2. Give practical ENTRY POINTS - Fill in the blank, Finish the sentence

- Allows those who are shy to have an entry point of prayer. And we need to hear from those people.

- Level the praying ground (between verbal hijackers and shy people who get shut down)
- Examples of entry points:
 - "God, you are _____"
 - "Not only are you _____[what the last person said], you are _____"
 - "God, you show your love for us BY _____"
 - "Jesus, because of your work, I am NOT _____, I am _____"
 - "God, you are a bigger rock THAN _____"
 - "God, you are beautiful to me BECAUSE _____"
 - "God, you are merciful, THEREFORE _____"
 - "God, may you do this SO THAT _____"
 - "God you show your faithfulness WHEN _____"
 - "God I bless you EVEN THOUGH _____" (or even when, even if, in spite of, in the midst of)
 - "Thank you God for saving me FROM _____"

Appendix 3: Accountability questions (full list)

4. **Do you have spiritual assurance of your standing in Christ?** How clear and vivid is it?
5. **How does the Holy Spirit bear witness with your spirit** that you are his child? Are you conscious of a growing spiritual light within, revealing more of the purity of the law, the holiness of God, the evil of sin, and the preciousness of the imputed righteousness of Christ?
6. **Is your love for Christians growing?** Do you find yourself having a less censorious, judgmental spirit toward weak Christians, those who fall, or those who are self-deceived? Have you been cold to anyone?
7. **Is your conscience growing tenderer to convict you** of the very first motions of sin in the mind, such as the onset of resentment; worry, pride, or jealousy; an inordinate desire for power, approval, and material comfort; and an over-concern for your reputation? Are you becoming more aware of and convicted about sins of the tongue, such as cutting remarks, rambling without listening, deception and semi-lying, gossip and slander, inappropriate humor, or thoughtless statements?
8. **Do you see signs of growth in the fruit of the Spirit?** Can you give examples in which you responded in a new way — with love, joy, patience, honesty, humility, or self-control — in a situation that a year or two ago you would not have?
9. **Are you coming to discern false, idolatrous motives for some of the good service you do?** Are you seeing that many things you thought you did for God you are actually doing for other reasons? Are you coming to see areas of your life in which you have resisted the Lord's will?
10. **Are you seeing new ways to be better stewards of the talents, gifts, relationships, wealth, and other assets that God has given you?**
11. **Are you having any seasons of the sweet delight that the Spirit brings?** Are you finding certain promises extremely precious? Are you getting answers to prayers? Are you getting times of refreshing from reading or listening to the Word?

Note on confidentiality:

For vulnerability culture to thrive, trust is paramount. To preserve, trust, confidentiality is key.

Here are some general rules of confidentiality: 1) Informed consent unless high risk, 2) Need-to-know basis, 3) Circle of trusted advisors only, 4) Confidentiality is not the same as secrecy

APPENDIX 4: Shepherding for heart change

VISION: One degree of glory to another

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

- 2 Cor 3:18 -

2 crucial steps in caring for others:

1. GODLY ASSESSMENT: Know your flock

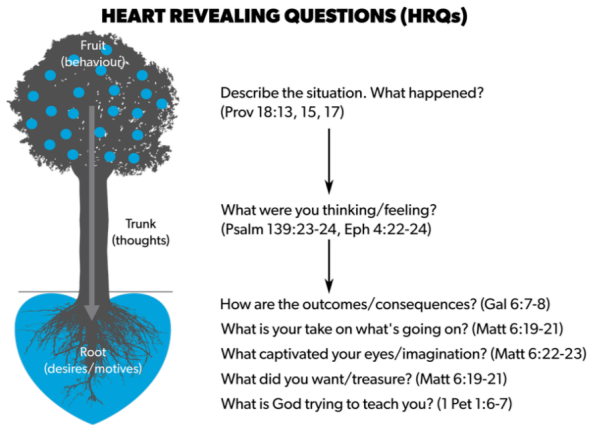
Know well the condition of your flocks, and give attention to your herds

Prov 27:23

a. ASK heart-revealing questions

The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.

Prov 20:5



b. Be quick to LISTEN, but slow to speak

If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame...The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him."

Prov 18:13, 17

c. **KNOW** the **RISK** (i.e. the SOS)

SEVERITY – How long has this been going on? Is it better or worse than X months/weeks ago?

OWNERSHIP – How have you contributed to this situation? What do you think is God’s take on this situation?

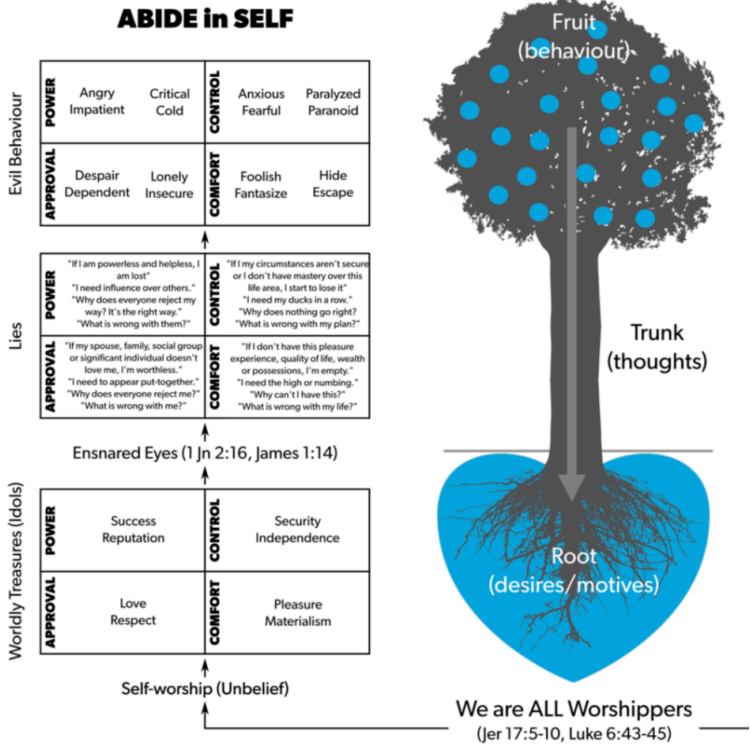
SUPPORT – Who else knows about this? How have they helped you?

Severity	1	5	10
	Wisdom issue	Moderate conflict	Crisis
	Mild Stress	Distressed but functioning	Stronghold sin
	Everyday problems	More complex issues	Significant suffering
Ownership	1	5	10
	Repentant	Sees sin	Blameshifts
	Open	Makes excuses	Defensive
	Highly teachable	Moderately teachable	Denial - Not teachable
Support	1	5	10
	Close to family	Some family support	Estranged from family
	Intimate & Accountable	Few friends	No friends
	Vulnerable in small group	Somewhat open in small group	Isolated - Not in small group

Scores:

To find the right score, add your severity, ownership, and support scores together. You should come up with a score between 3 and 30. The ranges on the following page will help you decide what to do next. Remember, you need to adjust responses on a case-by-case basis.

d. KNOW the ROOT (i.e. the Fruit-to-Root)



2. GODLY COUNSEL: Speak the truth in love

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Eph 4:15-16

1. Speak truth, but BUILD UP

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ... Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but

only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Eph 4:25, 29

2. TAILOR your care

And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

1 Thess 5:14

3. Present the GOspel to the HEART

