

# **IMPACT**

# **303**

**7 FOUNDATIONAL  
LESSONS FOR MEN TO  
THRIVE IN THE RELATIONSHIPS  
THAT MATTER MOST**

**IMPACTPLAYERS.ORG**



**IMPACT**



## IMPACT 303

### 7 Week Overview and Weekly Game Plan:

**Week 1: God's Story:** Before you can rightly understand your story, you must begin with God's Story. Learn how to see the story of God in the Bible, in your life and in your world.

ABC Bible Study- John 14

Scripture Memory Verse- **"For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ."** 2 Corinthians 5:21

**Week 2: My Story:** While we are a part of God's Story, we also have our own individual story that God has blessed us with. It is our privilege and responsibility to share our story with others.

ABC Bible Study- John 15

Scripture Memory Verse- **"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."** Philippians 1:6

**Week 3: Spiritual Nourishment:** Making sure your family is well fed spiritually.

ABC Bible Study- John 16

Scripture Memory Verse: **"And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near."** Hebrews 11:25

**Week 4: Lead and Serve:** Before you lead in your marriage, do not forget to serve. Husbands will get a "Master's" degree in leadership.

ABC Bible Study- John 17

Scripture Memory Verse: **"Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them."** Colossians 3:19

**Week 5: Minefields part 1:** Money and Kids- Learning to navigate the stressful aspects of life as a married couple.

ABC Bible Study- John 18

Scripture Memory Verse: **"True godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it."** 1 Timothy 6:6-7

**Week 6: Minefields part 2:** Time and Parents- Learning to navigate the stressful aspects of life as a married couple.

ABC Bible Study- John 19

Scripture Memory Verse: **"Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."** Ephesians 5:15-16

**Week 7: Mutual Repentance:** The secret to vital relationships is Biblical reconciliation through regular confession and forgiveness.

ABC Bible Study- John 20

Scripture Memory Verse: **"Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord."** Hebrews 12:14



## Pre-Season Training

**Men,**

We are about to enter into the third 7 week session of the IMPACT Cohort season. We will be intentionally focusing on 7 foundational lessons that every man needs to thrive in the relationships that matter most. Before our first meeting, take the time to go through this “Pre-Season training,” so you will be ready to hit the ground running.

**The Playbook:** IMPACT 303 takes 7 key lessons from three unique studies- 1) Faith Coaching 2) Husband Coaching 3) Dad Coaching. Wherever you are in your spiritual development, or relationally as a dad or a husband, there are important nuggets that you will receive each week that will help you grow as a man. More importantly, it is the process of talking about important things with other men pursuing similar goals that will make the next 7 weeks together transformational. Open yourself up to growing in these areas and commit to the process and you will see great benefit from this experience.

As a part of the preparation for each study, please carve out a window of time to engage in the ABC Bible reading. On the next page, you will find a blank ABC Bible Study guide which will walk you through the steps. Each week, we will assign a chapter from a book of the Bible to read in advance before our Coaching Cohort. After reading the chapter, please take a few minutes to write down any questions you might want to Ask about the chapter. Then, write down your **Best** verse, the verse that stood out to you the most. Finally, write down, the **Challenge** that this verse leaves you with for the week.

Secondly, take time to memorize the brief scripture verse each week. The Warrior-Poet King David says in the Psalms, ***“I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”*** (Psalm 119:11) Every scripture memorized is a deposit in the bank, a log in the fire, a bullet in the gun. It’s important and helpful for every man to know the truth and have it readily available to him.

Third, remember that what you put into this coaching cohort will determine what you will get out of it. Apathy and procrastination are not the marks of a dynamic leader, and they should not define your involvement in this cohort. As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. For the next 7 weeks, let’s raise the bar, increase the intensity, and watch the results flow in. You can’t cheat the grind, so let’s set our face like flint and get after it together!



## IMPACT MEN

### ABC Bible Study:

**A) ASK:** What questions do you have about this chapter? What sparked your curiosity or left you confused?

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**B) BEST Verse:** Which verse in this passage really caught your attention or made you think in a deeper way?

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**C) CHALLENGE or CONVERSATION:** (What is GOD saying to you in this passage?)

How is God challenging me to grow in response to this Bible Verse?

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## IMPACT MEN

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**Week 1: God's Story:** Before you can rightly understand your story, you must begin with God's Story. Learn how to see the story of God in the Bible, in your life and in your world.

ABC Bible Study- John 14

Scripture Memory Verse- **"For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ."** 2 Corinthians 5:21

**Opening-** What is the greatest story you ever read or heard? What elements did the story include? Was there an introduction or beginning to the story? Was there a plot or a conflict? Did the story have a resolution? Why is it that all stories share these common traits? Is it possible that God is the greatest author of them all? Is it possible that God's story is the greatest story of all?

**Key Idea:** Understanding the Scripture may seem difficult until you learn to see it as "God's great story of redemption and glory."

God's Story can be understood in the context of four major storylines: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration.

**1. Creation:** The word Genesis means beginning. In the beginning, there was God. God is the creator of all things, and all things that He created were good. Genesis 1 & 2 beautifully capture the creation story. In the beginning, everything existed in perfect harmony. God and man. Man and woman. Mankind and nature all flourished in their relationships with one another.

Q. Is it difficult to imagine a world where this kind of peace and harmony once existed? Why or why not?

Q. How does understanding that the way the world is today (pain, disease, suffering, evil, etc), is not the way God created it to be impact your view of God? Does it create a longing for God's intended creation to be restored?

*"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1*

*"And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." Genesis 1:31*

**2. Fall:** Genesis 3 unveils the plot. Peace and harmony were compromised when Adam and Eve rebelled against God's authority in their relationship with Him. We refer to their choice to disobey God's command in the Garden of Eden and fall into sin as "the Fall." As the first human beings, they represented mankind and their actions impacted all of humanity. As humans, we now all carry the curse of a sinful nature. A sinful nature that makes us naturally opposed to God's authority in our lives, therefore making us enemies of God. It is this sinful rebellion against God causes us to be doomed to an eternal, spiritual death. Sin has infiltrated every area of our universe, bringing conflict between man and God, nature and one another.

Q. How have you and I been impacted by sin? How does sin impact our relationship with God and others?

Q. Think about a lot of the more difficult moral issues of our world today. How does viewing them through the lens of the fall help you to see the brokenness in our world more clearly?

*"sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned." Romans 5:12*

**3. Redemption:** The greatness of God's glorious character is that although He is perfectly holy and just, punishing sin as only a righteous God would do, He is also unimaginably loving, gracious and merciful. It is out of this love, grace and mercy that God provided a master plan for redeeming the world and rescuing fallen sinners. Knowing what would be necessary to provide a path to redemption, He sent His only Son Jesus to



provide a sacrifice and a payment for the sin of mankind. Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God Himself came to redeem mankind and reconcile the sin that had separated man and God.

Q. What role did mankind play in making things right with God? Is there anything that we can do apart from Jesus to bring our lives back into harmony with God?

Q. How did Christ's death on the cross and resurrection from the grave redeem us from our sin?

*"For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ."* 2 Corinthians 5:21

**4. Restoration:** The story does not end with Christ's redemptive work on the cross. There is still one storyline that is yet to be completed- Restoration. A time will come in which God will completely restore the perfect harmony that once existed within creation. This restoration will take place when Christ returns and ushers in a new kingdom and reign. He will judge all sin and evil and will restore creation with righteousness and peace. Sin will be no more and mankind will once again be in perfect union with God, nature and one another.

Q. Is it possible for you to imagine a day when this kingdom becomes reality?

Q. What does it mean for us to pray for God's Kingdom to come and to "seek first the Kingdom" with our lives?

*"And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."* Revelation 21:5



Q. Look at the image above. How will this understanding of Scripture guide the way you read the Bible moving forward.

**Go Further:** Take time to try to share "God's Story" with a friend this week.



**Week 2: My Story:** While we are a part of God's Story, we also have our own individual story that God has blessed us with. It is our privilege and responsibility to share our story with others.

ABC Bible Study- John 15

Scripture Memory Verse- "*And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*" Philippians 1:6

**Opening-** Last week, we looked at the Scripture from the perspective of God's Story. We discovered that God's story as revealed through Scripture can be broken into four major storylines: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration. While we are a part of God's Story, we also have our own individual story that God has blessed us with. It is our privilege and responsibility to share our story with others. Our story should point people to a greater understanding of God's Story, so for that reason, we will use the same storylines when describing our story as we do when describing God's.

**Key Idea:** There is one story that we can all share and no one can debate- Our own story. We should become masters at telling our story with others.

Our Story can be understood in the context of four major storylines: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration.

***"but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."*** 1 Peter 3:15

**1. Creation:** Just as God's story has a "Genesis" or beginning, so does our story. It begins with the understanding that God loves us and that He created us for a relationship with Him.

Share the basics of your beginning. Where you grew up, what your family situation was like, and important challenges or life events that may help people connect with your story.

Q. Describe the beginning of your story in a minute or two.

**2. Fall:** When sin infiltrated mankind through the fall of Adam, we were all born into the curse of sin.

Describe how sin separated you from God and how your sin caused you to live in rebellion to His commands. It is important to share this part of your story to demonstrate your need for Christ and forgiveness of sin. Be careful not to glorify your sinful past but be honest about your situation before you came to Christ.

***"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*** Romans 3:23

***"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*** Romans 6:23

Q. Describe the impact that sin had on your relationship with God before you came to know Christ.

**3. Redemption:** Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God Himself came to redeem mankind and reconcile the sin that had separated man and God. How did you come to understand your need for Christ? What events occurred that brought you to a place of understanding and desiring to be forgiven by Jesus? Be sure to put into words what you believed about the Gospel. By sharing your story of faith in Christ, you are also sharing how someone else can put their faith in Christ as well, so be specific.

***"See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are."***

1 John 3:1

***"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to***



***be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.***" 1 John 4:9-11

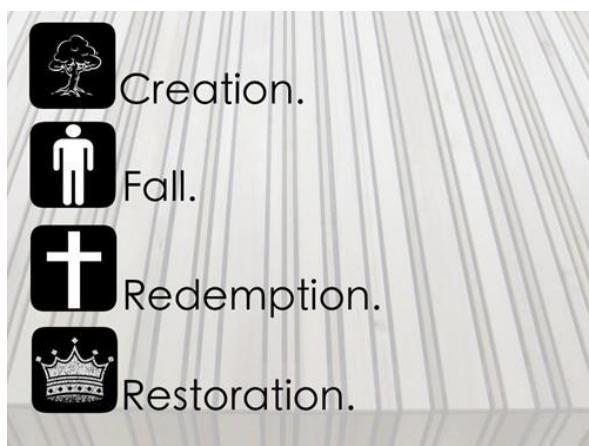
Q. Describe how you came to place your faith in Christ and the impact that your decision had on you, your life and those around you.

**4. Restoration:** The story does not end with Christ's redemptive work on the cross. God is continuing to make us more and more like Christ every day.

Q. Describe how God is continuing to work in your life to bring you into the likeness of Christ. What negative habits is He eliminating? How is your speech and thinking changing?

***"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."*** Philippians 1:6

Q. Describe the changes God is making in your life to restore you unto Christ's likeness.



**Go Further:** Take time to try to share "Your Story" with a friend this week.



**Week 3: Spiritual Nourishment:** Making sure your family is well fed spiritually.

ABC Bible Study- John 16

**Scripture Memory Verse:** *"And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near."* Hebrews 11:25

**INTRO:** Describe your favorite meal. Does it make your mouth water just thinking about it?

**Read:** *"For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world." Then they said to Him, "Lord, always give us this bread." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."* John 6:33-35

Q. What does Jesus say will satisfy our deepest spiritual hungers and thirsts?

Q. Take an honest assessment of yourself- are you spiritually malnourished? What about your kids?

**Growth Challenge:** Brainstorm a list of spiritual disciplines and techniques that can help someone grow spiritually. Which of those spiritual disciplines are you actively engaged in?

Read the following passages- 1 Peter 2:2-3, 1 Corinthians 3:1-2 and Hebrews 5:12-14

Q. What do these passages teach us about how people should grow spiritually in their spiritual nourishment.

**INSIDER TIP:** One step ahead. You do not need to be a spiritual giant in order to be a spiritual leader in your home. Even if you are only one step ahead of your kids, you can lead them. Begin with simple truths and teaching from God's Word and then empower your kids to become more spiritually confident in their faith by teaching them to feed themselves spiritually and ultimately, to feed others too.

**Read-** *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."* 1 Timothy 2:15

Q. What does it take to become confident in handling the Word of God?

**Growth Challenge:** Pray together. Find a consistent time when your family can pray together. Perhaps, before bed, at dinner or in the morning before school.

**INSIDER TIP:** Daily devotional. Find an online devotional and read it together as a family. Open up opportunities to ask questions and go deeper.

**Read-** *"And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near."* Hebrews 11:25

Q. How important is church involvement to you and your family? What does this communicate to your kids about their spiritual growth vs. other activities and interests?

Q. How are you being encouraged by others at church? How are you encouraging others?

**INSIDER TIP:** Don't be a spectator, get in the game. Many people these days attend church as spectators- attending the service, but not serving or engaging in relationships with others. Those that get involved by



serving regularly and plugging into a small group will find much greater spiritual growth for themselves and their families than simply being a spectator.

**Walk with God:** Do you feel like you are spinning your wheels spiritually? Read John 15 and reflect on the word “Abide.” Write out the benefits for abiding with Christ and consider how you can invite Jesus into every moment of your day and every aspect of your family life.



**Week 4: Lead and Serve:** Before you lead in your marriage, do not forget to serve. Husbands will get a "Master's" degree in leadership.

ABC Bible Study- John 17

Scripture Memory Verse: "***Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.***" Colossians 3:19

Video: Watch this video of a message by the late Martin Luther King Jr. <https://youtu.be/hTyXw2MNLA8>

**Intro: 60 second debate-** Who is the GREATEST Basketball player of all time? Greatest CEO? Greatest Rock band?

Q. What normally defines greatness?

Read Matthew 20:25-28

Q. How does Jesus define greatness in His Kingdom?

Q. With this definition in mind, what is the key to true greatness as a husband? As a leader?

Read- "***Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.***" Ephesians 5:21-23

Q. How does an attitude of mutual service and submission to one another out of reverence for Christ precede effective leadership in your marriage?

Q. How does a humble attitude toward your wife inspire her to humbly follow your leadership?

**INSIDER TIP:** There is a difference between leading with conviction and being dogmatic and stubborn. Take time to think together with your spouse what your shared convictions are- as Christians, as a married couple, as parents, etc. Determine whether or not some of the things you may differ on are based on preferences, upbringing, or a legitimate foundational conviction.

Read- "***Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.***" Ephesians 5:25-27

Q. Service and Sacrifice- These two words clearly shine through in the model that Jesus presented for us as husbands. How has Jesus served and sacrificed for us?

Q. How do we reflect service and sacrifice for our wives?

Q. According to this passage, what is the goal of serving and sacrificing for our spouse? How often do you think about it in this way?

**Consider This: Celebrate her RADIANCE.** Your wife is more like a fine wine than a new car. A new car loses its value the moment it drives off the lot. Every scratch, dent and mile on the odometer reduces its worth and appeal. After 7-10 years, it's time to trade the clunker in. Sadly, many men treat their wives this way... they are pristine on the day they marry, but after 100,000 miles and a lot of bumps along the road, they are ready for a newer model. Instead, consider your wife more like a fine wine. She gets better and is more desirable with age! Women tend to look at their wedding day as their most radiant moment... plan a trip, a date or an experience in which you can celebrate her radiance as a bride to you now. Focus on her physical beauty to you, her character, her personality and the impact she has made in your life and children.



**GROWTH CHALLENGE: Grand or Every Day?** What are you more inclined to do for your wife- a Grand gesture of love and sacrifice or small, every day acts of selfless care? Most men tend to fall in one of those camps.

Take a moment to determine which camp you are in, and which one might need a little more attention. Does your wife need to see a grand gesture of service, sacrifice or romantic attention from you? Or, does she need to know that you are engaged in the day to day duties and responsibilities of life and family? Identify your area of weakness, and create a plan to intentionally shore it up.

Read- ***"Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them."*** Colossians 3:19

- Q. Why would a husband be harsh with his wife? (Motivating factors, circumstances, attitudes, etc).  
Q. How do we love, lead and serve our wives with our words?

**Final Reminder:** One of the greatest testimonies of the Gospel to a watching world is how we love and lead our wives. Our sons will learn how to treat women by watching our example. Our daughters will know how they deserve to be treated by observing our actions and attitudes. Our neighbors and friends will determine whether Christ can really change a person and his relationships through the way that we model Christ in our marriage. The most important ministry you have is to love and lead your wife well.



**Session Five: Minefields part 1: Money and Kids** - Learning to navigate the stressful aspects of life as a married couple.

ABC Bible Study- John 18

Scripture Memory Verse: "***True godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it.***" 1

Timothy 6:6-7

**Intro:** Do you remember the old video game Frogger? You had to avoid a variety of moving vehicles, jump on floating logs and dodge other obstacles without getting smashed. Marriage can feel that way... if you make one misstep, the whole thing can blow up! You are not alone, while every marriage is unique, there are a few common "minefields" that have the potential to cause harm to your marriage. Today and next week, we will cover a few of those minefields together.

**Minefield 1: Money.** 1/3 of all marriages report they have experienced stress in their marriage due to money issues. The other 2/3's are lying! With increasing credit card and school debt, rising housing costs and issues related to millennials transitioning into an established career, many marriages begin in a deep financial hole. In addition, the average cost of raising a child in the US has ballooned to over \$300,000 per child (by the time they reach 18).

Read- "***By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.***" Proverbs 24:3-4

Q. According to this verse, what 2 things we need more of in our marriages to have a financially viable marriage? Why is "more money" not the answer?

Q. Knowledge and wisdom when it comes to our finances can have a tremendous impact on our marriages. Do you consider yourself to be "wise" and "knowledgeable" in the area of family finances?

Q. Where do you go to gain wisdom and knowledge in your finances?

**GROWTH CHALLENGE:** Not everyone has a background in accounting, investment or financial wizardry. There is nothing wrong with recognizing you need help. Find an older, more established couple who can serve as "Money Mentors" for you and your spouse. Ask them questions and take their advice. This is a key to gaining wisdom and knowledge.

Read- "***The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps.***" Proverbs 14:15

Q. A discerning couple will not fall for the "have it now" promises that leave many saddled with debt. What are some financial traps that you or others you know have fallen into?

Q. How have you given thought to your financial steps as a couple? Do you have a budget? Do you have a financial plan to reduce debt and build wealth?

Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10

Q. What are some of the "senseless and harmful desires" that can plunge a marriage into "ruin and destruction?"

Q. Most Christian couples would be quick to say they do not love money, but a love for comfort, convenience and a comparable lifestyle to those around them is essentially the same thing. How can this love of money creep into your marriage and family?

**Minefield Two: Kids.** Children are a gift and blessing from the Lord. "***Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from him.***" Psalm 127:3. Yet. children can also become a tremendous source of stress and



conflict on a marriage. Many parents confess to feeling overwhelmed, exhausted and stressed out, disconnected from their spouse and nothing more than a glorified chauffeur for their kids activities.

**Insider Tip:** It is easy for a husband to get caught up in the whirlwind without a clear vision for his family and an understanding of his values and priorities. Take time to write out your priorities as a husband and as a father. Is there anything about your current schedule and perspective that is out of alignment? Take the necessary steps, no matter how difficult, to get back on track.

Conflict and arguments are normal in most marriages and families. Understanding what hills are worth dying on is important, especially as your children into adolescence and early adulthood. Read- ***"man's wisdom gives him patience. It is to his glory to overlook an offense."*** Proverbs 19:11

Q. How does wisdom lead you to be more patient as a husband and dad? What offenses are acceptable to overlook? Which ones need to be confronted and corrected?

Q. If you are consistently getting in arguments with your spouse over the kids, is there any selfish desire that you need to confess and repent of? Read ***"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet. But you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God."*** James 4:1-2

Q. How often do you and your spouse pray over your kids? Are there any issues on which you disagree that you need to humbly bring before God and His Word?

**Final Thought:** How has your marriage been impacted by these Minefields? What is one thing you can do to address these issues with your spouse today?



**Week 6: Minefields part 2: Time and Parents**- Learning to navigate the stressful aspects of life as a married couple.

ABC Bible Study- John 19

**Scripture Memory Verse:** “*Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*” Ephesians 5:15-16

**Minefield 3: Time.** “*Time is what we want most, but what we use worst.*” William Penn. It never seems like we have enough time to do the things we need to do. While we all have the same amount of time, how we manage our time can be vastly different. Some people waste countless hours each week on frivolous pursuits and distractions. Others take pride in maximizing every second by running at a ragged, unsustainable pace. Meanwhile, God gives us a third path for viewing our time- Sovereign Margin.

What is Sovereign Margin? It begins with this simple, yet profound understanding- “I am not God.” Every human being has limits on their time, energy and resources. We recognize that it is God who makes the earth orbit around the sun, and it is God who controls the final outcome of our output. Second, God calls us to build margin, or unoccupied time, into our schedules. In six days, God created the entirety of the universe. On the seventh day, God rested from His work (Genesis 2:2) More than just a footnote on the creation story, this was a template for how we should also live our lives (see Exodus 20:8-10).

Read- “***Be still and know that I am God.***” Psalm 46:10

Q. How difficult is it for you to be still... not just physically, but emotionally and mentally as well?

Q. How do you intentionally build margin for this kind of quietness with God?

Read- “***And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.***” Mark 1:35

Q. Do you think your day is busy? Read **Mark 1:14-34** to get a glimpse of a day in the life of Jesus. How does your day compare to His?

Q. Jesus knew no one was going to give him space and margin to be still and quiet with God, He would have to take it. Jesus went to the mountains- where do you go to get away with God?

“A change of place + a change of pace = a change of perspective.” Mark Batterson

In addition to our time with God, we should also build margin into our schedule for quality time with our spouse and children.

Q. What is the difference between “managing schedules” and “being together?”

Read Matthew 5:29-30 from the perspective of your time. Are there any “extreme measures” you should consider that may help you free more time for the things that really matter?

 Do you know what this symbol represents on a musical score? It is called a “quarter rest,” which means the music ceases for one count. Music without a rest is just a cacophony, but rest is what gives the music its shape and beauty. Similarly, without spiritual, mental and physical rest for ourselves, our marriages and our families, our lives will become an unbearable cacophony or relentless noise.

**Minefield 4: Parents.** As we age, so too do our parents, and in varying degrees, the relationship between you and your spouse will be impacted by the relationships you have with each of your parents.



Q. Describe the relationships you and your spouse share with each of your parents.

Q. Is this a source of stress or strain on your marriage in any way?

Read- "***Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.***" Genesis 2:24

Q. In what ways have you and/or your spouse struggled to transfer from dependence upon parents to interdependence with one another?

Q. How have you and your spouse taken time to communicate and process the impact that each of your parents has on your marriage and family? Are there some things that you need to communicate with your wife about her relationship with her parents?

Read- "***But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God...***" "***But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.***" 1 Timothy 5:4,8

Q. What is a believer's role in caring for his aging parents?

Q. What does this look like for you and your spouse? Do you have a plan for this aspect of your marriage?

**Insider Tip:** If you have not done so, take time to have a conversation with your spouse and then each of your parents to discuss what each other's expectations and wishes are about how you are to care for them as they enter into advanced age.

**Insider Tip:** Do you have a Will for you and your spouse? Many young families have not taken the time to establish a Will for their families. Make sure that both you and your parents have a Will, and during that time, enter into some meaningful discussions about palliative care.

**Final Thought:** Just like having young children, caring for an aging parent is an emotionally draining and time-consuming endeavor. Make sure to build life giving moments, romantic get-a-ways and dates as well as sabbath rest into your marital rhythms. Find times to laugh and rekindle your love for one another in the midst of challenging and stressful seasons of care.



**Session Seven: Mutual Repentance:** The secret to vital relationships is Biblical reconciliation through regular confession and forgiveness.

ABC Bible Study- John 20

Scripture Memory Verse: "***Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.***" Hebrews 12:14

**INTRO-** Say these words out loud- "I am sorry. I was wrong. Please forgive me. I love you."

Q. Why are these words so hard for men to say to the people they love?

### Read Genesis 3:6-13

Q. What was the impact of sin on the relationship between God and man? Man and Wife?

When we sin; shame, anger, guilt, bitterness and blame will drive a wedge into our relationships.



#### Ways We Break Relationships:

- Allow ourselves to be ruled by our emotions, particularly frustration, anger and impatience.
- Refuse to admit and confess our part in an offense or conflict.
- Choose to blame others and justify our own behavior and attitudes.

### Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-6:1

Jesus came to forgive our sins and reconcile the broken relationship between God and Man. Now, we have been given the ministry of reconciliation to share with one another.

Q. How have broken relationships impacted you personally? Your marriage? Your parenting?

Q. What is reconciliation? How do we reconcile a broken relationship?

Mutual repentance is the secret to ongoing reconciliation in our relationships, especially at home.



#### Ways We Heal Relationships:

- Practice reflective listening and self-control when engaged in conflict.
- Place the focus of your attention on your own responsibility in the hurt.
- Ask for forgiveness clearly and directly without using the word "but."

### Read 1 John 1:5-9

Q. What does this passage say about trying to hide or cover up our sins before God and others?

Q. What step must we take in order to receive God's forgiveness and cleansing?

Q. Is there any sin that is too big for God to forgive?

Q. How does this passage inform the way you should practice mutual repentance with your spouse or kids?

**INSIDER TIP:** Your Greatest Opportunity: Believe it or not, confessing your sin and seeking forgiveness from your wife and kids is one of the most powerful ways you can demonstrate the power of the Gospel in your family. If "Dad never admits he is wrong," the kids will soon adopt this same mentality. By humbly confessing your failure in a fleshly moment, you tear down the barriers of pride to allow real authenticity and vulnerability from your kids.



**Growth Challenge:** Create a Gospel pattern for reconciliation within your family. Example-

- We will not hide our sins or blame others for our spiritual failures.
- We will confess our sins and seek forgiveness from those we have offended or hurt.
- We will always forgive and not hold our sins against each other.
- We will strive to grow from every failure.

Read this quote- *"Living at peace with others is hard work. It is also transformative. When we keep in mind the message of the gospel, God reconciled us to himself through Christ, we are inspired to see and own our sin, seek forgiveness, help others see and own their sin, and extend forgiveness. With God's help, we are enabled to repent, confess, and forgive."* Judy Dabler

**Walk with God:** Stop for a moment and consider if there are any relationships in your life that have an unresolved conflict. Read this verse and consider what effort you can make to take a step toward reconciliation. *"So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."* Matthew 5:23-24