

#3 Emotional Health in a Broken World

Purpose of Living on Mission: Equip students to walk by faith, communicate their faith, and multiply their faith. Top 20 things to help you not just survive but thrive in your faith for a lifetime!

Goal of Seminar: Teach students how to pursue emotional health and spiritual growth in a broken world. Learn the basics of the Growth Model (bonding, boundaries, good/bad split, adulthood) and how to practically apply it to our everyday life. Highlight the principles of spiritual growth (grace + truth, over time = growth) and how it is important to evaluate areas we can grow, in order to become more like Christ and have healthy relationships.

HOOK: What is something you've grown in the past (garden, mustache, etc)? What was required for its growth? What was hard about its growth process for you?

ILLUSTRATIONS:

Add your own thoughts and illustrations in this column.

What are necessary ingredients for emotional and spiritual growth in the Christian life?

GROW - (Old English: grōwan, of Germanic origin; related to "grass" and "green")
1) to progress toward maturity
2) produce by cultivation

Read **Luke 13:6-9**

6 Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. **7** So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' **8** "Sir," the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. **9** If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'"

THREE NECESSARY INGREDIENTS FOR GROWTH

There are three ingredients essential for growth.

Draw on the board: $GROWTH = \frac{GRACE + TRUTH}{TIME}$

1) Grace: What is grace?

Grace is an undeserved gift from God; unmerited favor of God for people. Like fertilizer nurtures growth (v. 8), grace nurtures our growth spiritually and emotionally. We need God's unmerited favor towards us to grow!

"Grace is something we have not earned and do not deserve... it is unconditional love and acceptance... it is the essence of God. "God is love," and God loves us freely, without condition... it is the first ingredient necessary for growing up in the image of God... it is unbroken, uninterrupted, unearned, accepting relationship... it is the relational aspect of God's character." (*Changes that Heal*)

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2) Truth: What is truth?

Truth is what is real and accurate, how things really are. The man in the parable said he would “dig around [the fig tree].” (v. 8) Truth is knowing the difference between right and wrong. “Using the trowel of God’s truth, we must dig out the weeds and encumbrances of falsehood, sin, and hurt that keep the soil of our souls cluttered.” (*Changes that Heal*)

“Truth is the second ingredient necessary for growing up in the image of God... it is the structural aspect of God’s character... it leads us to what is real, to what is accurate... God’s truth contains the form that our soul and spirit should take.” (*Changes that Heal*)

3) Time: How would you define a process over time?

The gardner realized that his work and the fertilizer needed time to take effect, he was going to “leave it alone for one more year.” (v. 8) Quick growth will almost always be superficial and short-lived. Deep growth is always slower.

Here is a good proverb:

“The longest distance between any two points is the shortcut”

We want to grow in a healthy way - not taking any shortcuts that will eventually be detrimental to our growth. In fact, there are no real shortcuts to spiritual growth!

Re-read **Luke 13:8**. This is a great verse for growth = (grace + truth) / time

8 “‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it.

Read **Ephesians 4:1-6, 14-32**

1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. **2** Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **3** Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. **4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **14** Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. **15** Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. **16** From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

In Ephesians 4:1-6, 14-32, where do you see grace and truth?

A CLOSER LOOK AT GRACE & TRUTH

What are some of the dangers of grace without truth?

Grace without truth is **license**. License isn’t true freedom, just the impression of freedom. It leads to feeling stuck in the Christian life with little growth and character

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change. We falsely believe everything is “permissible” but fail to see how things really are and never experience true intimacy.

What are some of the dangers of truth without grace?

Truth without grace is **legalism**. It yields shame and guilt and condemnation. According to Henry Cloud, truth without grace “silences us, brings anger, increases sin, arouses sinful passions, brings death, puts us under a curse, holds us prisoner, alienates us from Christ, and judges us harshly.” (*Changes that Heal*)

Environments of low truth and low grace is **isolation**. You are not loved and cared for, nor are accountable.

Environments of high truth and high grace is **true freedom**. It is the way God designed life to be and is how He desires to grow us and sanctify us. Often an environment of high grace and high truth is hard to find - but it is what Biblical community is called to be!

Read **John 1:14, 16-17**

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. **16** Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. **17** For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

GRACE & TRUTH & TIME TOGETHER

What might it look like to have the perfect combination of truth and grace over time?

God accepts us completely, patient with us to grow and loving as we fail. Grace and truth came in full through Jesus Christ. Over time, we can grow in the likeness of Christ. (John 1:14, 16-17) “Grace and truth together reverse the effects of the fall, which were separation from God and others. Grace and truth together invite us out of isolation and into relationship. Grace, when it is combined with truth, invites *the true self*, the “me” as I really am, warts and all, into relationship... When the one who offers grace also offers truth (truth about who we are, truth about who he or she is, and truth about the world around us), and we respond with our true self, then real intimacy is possible.” (*Changes that Heal*)

FOUR AREAS OF GROWTH - DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

1) **Bonding: Matthew 22:37-39, 1 Thes 2:6-8**

Bonding is the ability to establish an emotional attachment with God, self and others. It is the ability to relate to someone on the deepest level, experiencing the joy of loving and being loved.

Becoming vulnerable

Becoming other-centered

Embracing love as God’s highest priority

What hinders bonding? past abuse, emotionally distant family, sinful choices, fear

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2) **Boundaries: 1 Corinthians 12:14-26, 15:10**

Boundaries, in short, define us. It is the realization of my own person apart from others; owning and knowing what's mine (attitudes, emotions, words, responsibilities, etc). Boundaries indicate a border or limit.

Defining ourselves

Defining our responsibilities

Defining our limits

How do we grow in boundaries? learn to hear "no" from others and learn to say "no" when drawing an appropriate border/limit

3) **Good/Bad Split: Philippians 1:6, 3:12-15, John 12:42-43**

Ability to look at the reality of a situation without going all-good or all-bad on the person/people/circumstances involved. It is learning to find the balance of the good and bad in everything and everyone.

Accepting our strengths and weaknesses

Admitting our strengths and weaknesses

Adopting a "progress" mentality

What are the effects of poor good/bad split? perfectionism, anger, passive-aggressive, cynical, black and white thinking

4) **Adulthood: 1 Corinthians 13:11, Matt 23:7-10**

Process of moving out of a one-up/one-down relationship into a peer relationship with other adults. An adult knows what they believe, are able to make decisions, doesn't depend on the approval of others, and appropriately submits to authority.

Embracing responsibility

Embracing authority

Living free under God's rule

Possible unhealthy relationships: one-down (fear, inferiority, need of approval) or one-up (domination, disrespect, parenting, hate for authority figures)

GROUP DISCUSSION

After explaining each of the 4 growth stages, split up into 4 groups to read the passages and discuss. Each group will discuss one of these growth areas and answer the questions together.

1) **Read the Scripture passages and discuss the definitions**

2) **What does unhealthy ___(growth area)___ look like?**

3) **What does healthy ___(growth area)___ look like?**

4) **How have you seen personal growth in ___(growth area)___?**

After each of the groups share with the class, encourage everyone to rate themselves how they're doing in each growth area on a scale from 1-10.

Identify two areas they are doing well and two areas they are hoping to grow. Have them write down one way they can grow in two of these areas they are getting stuck - **2 action points** to take with them for spiritual growth!

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VALUES IN CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST

Faith, Growth, and Fruitfulness

To someone who is discouraged in the Christian life, who is relying only on grace or only on truth, these values can seem like a great burden and overly results-oriented. Maybe that's how faith, growth, and fruitfulness sound to you right now.

To someone who is encouraged in the Christian life, who is growing to rely on grace and truth over time, these values will flow naturally from their spiritual and emotional health. A healthy Christian living on mission experiences faith, growth, and fruitfulness - three words that can be great descriptors of the abundant life that Christ came to give us.

Read **1 Corinthians 3:5-9**

5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. **6** I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. **7** So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. **8** The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. **9** For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

APPLYING THIS TO YOUR LIFE TODAY!

- 1) Growth is not easy, there will be growing pains
- 2) Growth happens in community (it's believed that people grow 10x faster in group therapy than individual therapy!)
- 3) Growth is worth it, we all want to be healthy/more like Christ!
- 4) Growth is possible because of Christ and through Christ alone; for His glory, our good, and the good of those around us.
- 5) As you seek to grow, with whom can you pass on these realities of spiritual growth and emotional health ?

Helpful Books

Changes that Heal, Dr. Henry Cloud

How People Grow, Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend

You Can Change, Tim Chester

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality, Peter Scazzero