

Discipleship Content: Grace and Truth

Section 1: PARTICIPANT PREP

COMPETENCY

“Grace and Truth” – Invitation and Challenge Matrix

Jesus’ call to us is to invite others to be a part of our lives and watch how we live and challenge them to live in deeper relationship with God. In order to disciple people to live more like Jesus, we need to learn the balance of invitation to relationship and challenge to change appropriately. Without both working together, people can’t grow into the people God has called them to be.

God invites us into a relationship with Him, where He offers us unconditional love and grace no matter where we have been or what we have done. At the same exact time God continually speaks challenge or responsibility into our lives to call us into the life He has created for us. When both invitation and challenge are high, we are living where God calls us to be.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read the Scriptures below and answer the questions.
2. Read the article and answer the questions.
3. Pray and ask God to speak clearly. How is He growing you towards more balance right now? Write out what you hear Him say.

Scripture - Read the following passages and answer the questions provided.

Matthew 16:13-28 – Jesus both invites and challenges Peter. Below is a portion of this passage.

JESUS’ INVITATION

¹⁷ Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

JESUS’ CHALLENGE

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!” ²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.” ²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

Mark 10:17-27 – Jesus challenges the rich man to find delight and approval from God alone and invites him into a personal relationship with Jesus himself.

¹⁷ As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁸ “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit

adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.”

²⁰ “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

²¹ Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

²² At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

²³ Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

²⁴ The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

²⁶ The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?”

²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”

John 8:2-11 – Jesus invites the accusers to stop judging when all are guilty of sin and challenges them to love everyone unconditionally.

² At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. ³ The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group ⁴ and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” ⁶ They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. ⁷ When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” ⁸ Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

⁹ At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. ¹⁰ Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

¹¹ “No one, sir,” she said.

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

Scripture Questions:

1. In all of these passages, Jesus brings both the values of invitation (grace) and challenge (truth) into his relationships. How do you see Jesus demonstrating these two approaches?
2. Do you have someone in your life (now or in the past) whom you could use some of these descriptive words to describe: warm, inviting, hospitable, encouraging? Who is that person?
3. Do you have someone in your life who you could describe in one of these ways: challenging, equipping, sometimes rebuking, empowering, willing to confront when necessary? Explain this person and their value in your life.

Article – Read the following description and answer the questions provided.

Invitation /Challenge Matrix

Material adapted from 3DM and “Building a Discipling Culture” by Mike Breen and Steve Cockram

As leaders, our role is to lead others closer to the heart of Jesus. We want to not only provide a place where people find authentic community, but a place where people are challenged to be transformed into the person God created them to be. We can use the INVITATION/ CHALLENGE matrix to evaluate. Jesus gave us the perfect example of inviting and challenging as He led His disciples.

Jesus was in ministry for only three years. How was He able to accomplish leading/discipling a group of men, most of whom no one else would have chosen, to DO and to BE like Him in such a way that it would change human history forever? Jesus did it in a way that did not send His disciples running or overwhelm them. He created a mix of invitation and challenge in the way He related to them. We see this illustrated in Matthew 16:13-28:

- Jesus affirms Peter and invites him to draw closer.
- Jesus is the big rock; Peter is the little rock. Jesus shares His identity with Peter as a partner with God.
- Peter is invited into a deeper relationship with Jesus.
- Peter is challenged as God tells him he is stumbling and focused on man more than God.

In the Gospels we see Jesus invite His followers into an intimate relationship with Him while also initiating a direct challenge to behaviors He knew were either wrong or unhealthy. He drew His disciples closer, loved them, but also gave them the opportunity to accept the responsibilities of discipleship.

God is both INVITATION (grace) and CHALLENGE (truth).

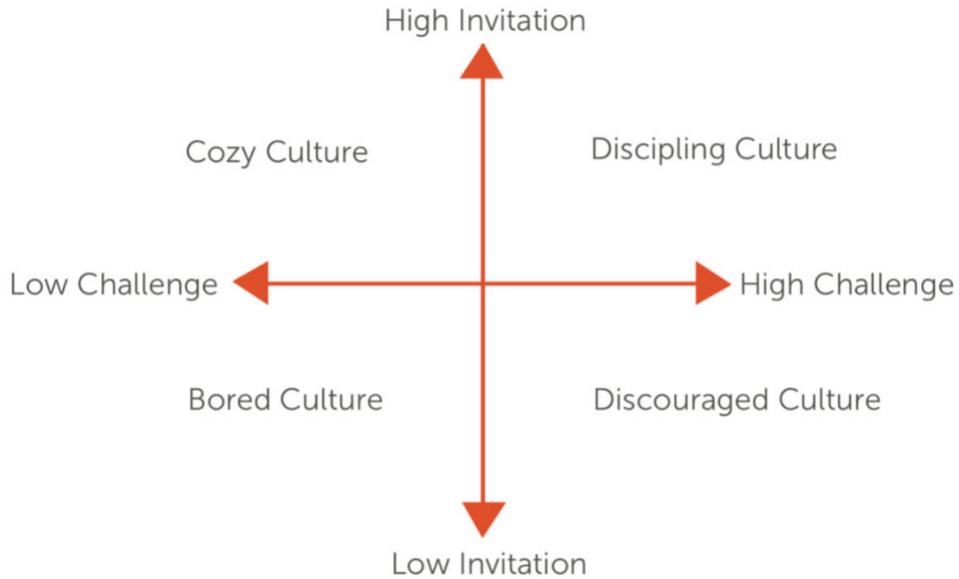
INVITATION

Refers to an attitude that says, “I’m glad you’re here, I’m committed to you and will welcome you no matter what”. There is grace in the relationship. You are invited into a relationship where you have access to a person’s life and all the safety, love, and encouragement that resides there.

But, by accepting the invitation, you also accept the challenge that comes with it.

CHALLENGE

Refers to an attitude that says, “I want you to grow, I’m committed to holding you accountable to change for the better”. There is truth in the relationship. You are challenged to live in your identity as a son or daughter of God.



Look at what each quadrant represents:

High Invitation + Low Challenge = Cozy Culture (Consumer)

People in this quadrant are super comfortable, but they are not growing spiritually because they have forgotten the mission. We are not meant to be cozy. A vital part of growth is sharpening one another through study, discussion and interaction.

Reaction: What does it look like to add challenge here?

Low Invitation + Low Challenge = Bored Culture (Apathetic)

People in this quadrant don't stay. People leave because they are bored and unmotivated, or if they stay, they slowly deteriorate and dry out. People are seeking spiritual growth and want to be part of community. We are wired for more.

Reaction: What does it look like to increase invitation and challenge?

High Challenge + Low Invitation = Discouraged Culture (Stressed)

People in this quadrant burn out because this culture cannot be sustained. There is a lot "to do", but without encouragement a person might feel alone and unknown.

Reaction: What does it look like to add invitation here?

High Invitation + High Challenge = Discipling Culture (Empowered)

This is where we all want to live! This is where Jesus lived.

Reflection and Discussion Questions:

1. As an individual, which one do I demonstrate more naturally? Invitation or Challenge?
2. Where does my family lean?
3. Where does my workplace lean?
4. How can I strengthen my leadership skills in these areas? What needs to change to move towards a Discipling Culture in all areas of my life?

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Section 2: LEADER GUIDE

SESSION CONTEXT

Jesus' call to us is to invite others to be part of our lives and watch how we live and challenge them to live in deeper relationship with God. The Invitation/Challenge Matrix tool helps us see when our invitation and challenge is anything but high. In order to disciple people to live more like Jesus, we need to learn to balance invitation to relationship and challenge to change appropriately. Without both working together, people can't grow into the people God has called them to be.

SESSION OUTLINE

CONNECT [5 mins]

Spend time allowing your group to connect with one another relationally.

CELEBRATE [5 mins]

What have you seen God do in your life since we met last that we can celebrate together?

CHECK-UP [5 mins]

How have you put the competency we learned last time into practice since we last met?

COACH [30 mins]

Coaching Focus Reminder: *Overall reminder about this section. Below is the participant guide with added "COACHING BOXES with questions, thoughts or conversation starters for your discussion. Any of the highlighted questions are "highly suggested" while everything else is at your discretion.*

Remember, we have all faced this struggle at some point or another. What or who helped you learn this specific competency? How significant has it been for you to lead your family and others? How thankful are you for the reminder of overflow is the path towards fruitfulness?

COMMUNICATE [2 mins]

Share important information with your group.

What to know before we meet again? Reiterate some of the next steps.

What do I need to know before the next meeting?

CARE [5 mins]

Spend time praying with your group (take specific prayer requests).

PARTICIPANT GUIDE WITH “COACHING BOXES”

COMPETENCY

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Coaching Opportunity

1. Take a moment to discuss a couple of the scripture reflection questions.
Reminder – we want to build upon the questions for “engaging in a listening and hearing from God” relationship from module 2: What is God saying? What do I do?
2. After you have reflected on a couple questions, read Matthew 16:13-28 together and discuss: Jesus gives the perfect example of inviting and challenging as He led his disciples. What do you think his disciples thought when He invited them in and challenged them towards growth? How did this push for balance change their identity, value and purpose?

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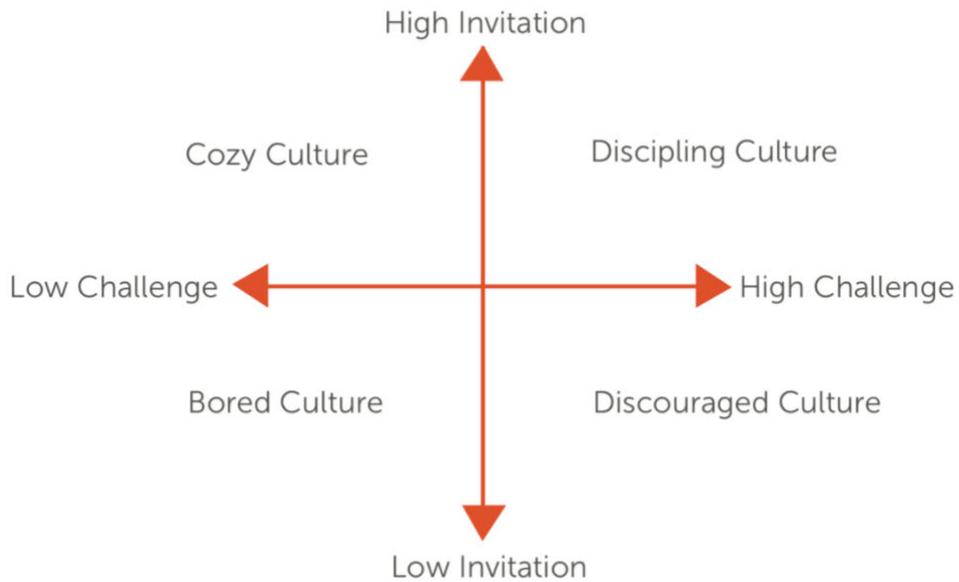
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Coaching Opportunity

1. Feel free to read this thought and question directly: Moving quadrants in the matrix is difficult. It requires endurance and vision. It completely relies on Jesus as you lean towards the Holy Spirit. Any movement is a win.
2. Discuss any of the other questions listed.

Reflection and Discussion Questions:

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2. Where does my family lean?
3. Where does my workplace lean?
4. How can I strengthen my skills in these areas? What needs to change to move towards a Discipling Culture in all areas of my life?

Coaching Opportunity

1. What's your story when it comes to Invitation/Challenge?
2. Key Learnings Question – How is God growing you towards balance?
3. Discuss any of the other questions listed.
4. Key Learnings Question – What is one of the key learning you want to them to walk away with?
5. Key Learnings Question – How will we use this principle in our homes, workplace, and volunteer role?
6. What are some practical ways I can apply this today?

Additional Resources – Use during session or for participant development.

1. Watch this 4-minute overview of the Invitation/Challenge Matrix.
<https://vimeo.com/205444455>
2. Read the book “Building a Discipling Culture” by Mike Breen and Steve Cockram
3. Read the blog “The Invitation-Challenge Matrix” at <https://firstcoastmissional.org/the-invitation-challenge-matrix/>