



STRATEGIC IMPACT INTERNATIONAL

ADVANCED LEADERSHIP THRUST® *“MARRIAGE”*

PARTICIPANT MANUAL

v1.1 (2017)



STRATEGIC IMPACT

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WELCOME!

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Welcome to the *STRATEGIC IMPACT ADVANCED LEADERSHIP THRUST*! We are delighted that you have returned for further training after your initial *BASIC LEADERSHIP THRUST* experience! We trust that you have continued to faithfully progress through the *SCHOOL OF MULTIPLYING CHURCH PLANTERS*, including continuing to make multiplying disciples through personal evangelism.

The focus of this *ADVANCED LEADERSHIP THRUST* is “Marriage.” We recognize that some of you are single at this time. We believe you will also benefit from these sessions, and we have prepared follow up exercises specifically for singles. The Marriage relationship is the closest “neighbor” relationship in the Great Commandment of “Love God and Love Neighbor”. Because this relationship is so foundational, the health of one’s marriage will have a significant effect on all other relationships. In fact, we believe that your family is your first ministry, and that a strong, healthy Christian family will result in a great impact for Christ and His Great Commission.

If you are married, it is imperative that you maintain a healthy marital relationship. If you are single and seeking to be married, it is imperative that you form true, Biblical ideals about marriage.

In this time together, we will focus on topics that directly contribute to the health, purpose, fulfillment, and joy of your marriage and how the Lord wants to work in and through your family for His purposes in the world.

May the Lord deepen your love for Him and for your spouse in the coming days.

Thank you again for joining with us! It is our honor to be with you!

Sincerely,

The Strategic Impact Team

IDENTITY:

We are a movement of like-minded leaders, passionately committed to Jesus Christ and to each other for the fulfillment of His Great Commission.

VISION:

We exist to offer every person the only hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ.

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." - Matthew 28:18-20

MISSION:

We prayerfully identify and train Leaders to multiply Disciples who ignite Church Planting Movements everywhere.

"...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 Timothy 2:2

STRATEGY:

We establish Leadership Teams in Strategic Cities of the world to multiply Church Planting Movements among every people group.

"(Paul) took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord." - Acts 19:9-10

PROCESS:

VISION SEMINAR (VS)
"SEE THE GREAT COMMISSION."
A one-day introduction to Strategic Impact.

LEADERSHIP THRUST (LT)
"EXPERIENCE THE GREAT COMMISSION."
A three-day intensive experience in personal growth, leadership, and church planting.

SCHOOL OF MULTIPLYING CHURCH PLANTERS (SMCP)
"LEARN AND LIVE THE GREAT COMMISSION."
A one-year team experience growing in Christ and multiplying church planters and churches.

SCHOOL OF MULTIPLYING LEADERS (SML)
"LEAD AND LAUNCH THE GREAT COMMISSION."
A one-year team experience multiplying leaders and church planting movements.

FAN-THE-FLAME SUMMIT (FTFS)
"MULTIPLY THE GREAT COMMISSION."
An annual three-day gathering for Staff, Leaders, and Multipliers to equip, encourage, and strategize in each major region of the world.



STEP 1:

CHANGE YOUR THINKING

*CHANGE your THINKING from the goal of "building my church" to "reaching my lost community → country → world."
(Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Acts 20:24)*



STEP 2:

PRAY

PRAY for laborers for the Harvest! (Luke 10:2; Acts 13:1-3)



STEP 3:

CAST THE VISION

*Cast God's VISION to His people for saturating your area with the Gospel.
(Acts 1:8; 13:1-3)*



STEP 4:

GATHER AND EQUIP A TEAM

Identify, select, GATHER AND EQUIP a team of at least two multiplying church planters each year.

(Acts 14:21-28; 19:9-10; Colossians 1:7; 2 Timothy 2:2)



STEP 5:

SELECT A SITE

PRAYERFULLY SELECT A SITE or a group of people God is leading you to reach with the Gospel. (Acts 16:6-40)

- A. DISCERN where the Holy Spirit is leading you to start a new cell church.
- B. INVESTIGATE needs, strongholds, and activities in the area that would affect the new cell church.



STEP 6:

EVANGELIZE

EVANGELIZE the people in the area. (Acts 5:42; 14:21,25; 20:20)



STEP 7:

DISCIPLE THE NEW BELIEVERS

DISCIPLE the new believers where they are. (Acts 14:22; 20:20)



STEP 8:

GATHER THE NEW BELIEVERS

GATHER the new believers together for:

- A. Welcome & Fellowship,
- B. Worship & Prayer,
- C. Study of the Word,
- D. Work & Witness.

(Acts 2:42,46; 12:12; 16:40; Romans 16:15; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15)



STEP 9:

MULTIPLY THE DISCIPLES

*MULTIPLY the disciples in the new church by repeating the first 8 steps.
(1 Thessalonians 1:7-8)*



STEP 10:

LOCK ARMS TO LAUNCH A MOVEMENT

LOCK ARMS with other Leaders to launch a movement of multiplying disciples to fulfill the Great Commission.



**STRATEGIC
IMPACT**
INTERNATIONAL

ADVANCED LEADERSHIP THRUST®

“MARRIAGE”

PARTICIPANT MANUAL

SESSION OUTLINES®

STRATEGIC IMPACT - ADVANCED LEADERSHIP THRUST: MARRIAGE
SESSION 1 - "GOD'S PURPOSE AND PLAN FOR MARRIAGE"

Introduction:

- Marriage is God's _____, not man's (Genesis 2:18-25).
- It is a divine institution that God created between a man and a woman, and is therefore, sacred.

WHAT IS GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MARRIAGE?

- A. To glorify God (*1 Corinthians 10:31*)
- B. To picture Christ's Relationship with the Church (*Ephesians 5:22-32*)
- C. To become One Flesh
(*Malachi 2:15, Matthew 19:3-6, 1 Corinthians 6:16-17; Ephesians 5:31*)
- D. To produce Godly Children (*Malachi 2:15*)
- E. To Meet Each Other's needs / desires (*Proverbs 5:15-19, 1 Corinthians 7:2, Genesis 2:18*)
- F. To Produce Christlikeness in Each Other (*Proverbs 27:15; Romans 8:29; Galatians 5:22-23*)

Conclusion:

Session 1 Exercise for Married Couples:

If you are married, take time to discuss the following questions:

1. Did we marry for the purpose of glorifying God? How can our marriage better reflect the glory of God and Christ's relationship to His church?
2. Are we raising our children in a godly way to know and follow Christ? How can we improve our parenting according to God's ways?
3. Tell each other what needs he/she fulfills in your life. Ask your marriage partner, "What needs do you have that I could better fulfill at this time?"
4. Tell your husband/wife how he/she has helped you become more like Christ. Tell each other how your partner could help you grow to be more like Christ.

5. Discuss the following marriage commitment:

"Because God has called us together in marriage to glorify Himself, magnify Christ, raise godly children, become one flesh and meet other's needs, I commit myself to be completely faithful to you, to strive to make our marriage all that God wants it to be, and to let nothing but death ever part us."

How would you express this commitment in your own words to your spouse?

If you are sincere and willing to fulfill this commitment, please sign below:

Husband: _____ Date: _____

Wife: _____ Date: _____

NOTE: If you have difficulty making this commitment as an individual or as a couple, please make an appointment with a Godly mentor or pastor and discuss the marriage issues which you need to work through together.

Session 1 Exercise for Single People:

If you are single, gather with other singles to discuss these questions:

1. How does God's purpose and plan for marriage differ from your own or your culture's ideas of what marriage should be?
2. Which of the six purposes of God for marriage is the newest idea for you? Which one excites you most as you think about your possible future marriage, and why?
3. Someone has said, "The best way to prepare for marriage is not to try to find the right mate, but to become the right person." How can you best become the person that would be a good husband/wife for another?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 7:25-35. How can you use this time in your life as a single person to best know, follow and serve Christ?
5. If God calls you to marriage in the future, what pressures or temptations as a single do you face that most threaten fulfilling God's purpose for your future marriage? What can you do to strengthen yourself to withstand these pressures or temptations?
6. Consider the following commitment:
"I realize that God's purpose for marriage is to bring glory to Himself and Christ, to raise godly children, to become one flesh and meet my partner's needs. In light of this, I pledge to concentrate on being a good and godly follower of Christ now and to only marry a Christian in order to fulfill God's plans for marriage. If God leads me to marry, I trust the Lord to bring the right person at the right time into my life. In the meantime I will live faithfully for the Lord (and my future spouse)."

If you are sincere and willing to make this commitment, please sign below:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Introduction:

I. God's Provided Sex as a Good gift for His People

- A. Sex was created by God, and is therefore, His gift to humanity.
(Genesis 1:28-29; Proverbs 5:15-19; Song of Solomon; 1 Timothy 4:4; Hebrews 13:4)
- B. Prior to marriage we are to abstain for any form of sexual immorality.
(1 Thessalonians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:4)
- C. Sex is to be enjoyed by one man and one woman within marriage.
- D. Sex outside of marriage - adultery or fornication - is never God's plan.
- E. When a society disregards God's commands to reserve sex for marriage, he allows a society to be overtaken by this sin (Romans 1:24-27).

II. God's Purpose for Sex within marriage

- A. Sex is a picture of oneness and unity. (1 Corinthians 6:16-17)
- B. Sex is for the pleasure of His people. (Song of Solomon; Proverbs 5:15-19)
- C. Sex is meant to also produce children. (Genesis 1:28; Malachi 2:15)
- D. Sex was given to help meet our personal needs. (1 Corinthians 7:1-5)

III. God Designed Sex to be a priority in Your Marriage. (1 Corinthians 7:3-5)

IV. God Designed Certain boundaries for Sex within Marriage.

(1 Corinthians 13:4-5; Hebrews 13:4)

Conclusion:

Session 2 Exercise for Married Couples:

If you are married, take time to discuss the following questions:

1. What faulty ideas about sex from the world or your experience did you bring into marriage?
Do we fully embrace sex a good gift from God to be enjoyed with each other?
2. Ask your spouse, “Are you satisfied with the frequency of sex that we have?”
3. Ask your spouse, “What could I do in our sexual relationship that would bring your more fulfillment and pleasure?”
4. Ask your spouse, “Is there anything in our sexual relationship that you feel uncomfortable with, or that you think is outside of God’s plan and purpose for sex?”
5. Do we feel that we have the number of children that God desires for us to have?

NOTE: If you have significant disagreement about the practice of sex in your marriage, please seek a godly and mature Christian counselor to help you work through these issues together.

Session 2 Exercise for Single People:

If you are single, gather with other singles - men with men, women with women - to discuss these questions:

1. What is the most important thing you learned from this session about God's purpose for sex?

Control over your sexual desires before marriage is very important in preparation to have the best possible sexual relationship in your marriage. Read together 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7 and discuss the following questions:

2. What do you most like about these verses?
3. What do you find confusing about these verses?
4. What do you learn about God and his purpose for sex in these verses?
5. What do you learn about people and how they are to handle their sexual desires.
6. In light of these verses, is there any action or relationship that you need to change?
7. How would you finish this statement, *"Before I am married, God wants me to control my sexual desires by..."*

STRATEGIC IMPACT - ADVANCED LEADERSHIP THRUST: MARRIAGE
SESSION 3 - "GOD'S ROLE FOR YOU IN YOUR FAMILY"

Introduction:

- Family relationships shape life, perhaps more than anything else.
 - One of God's greatest qualifications for spiritual leadership is how a leader functions within his family. (*1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6*)
- I. How one fulfills God's role for them in the family is the proving ground for his/her ministry. (*1 Timothy 3:4-5*)
- II. Nothing is more satisfying than close family relationships who relate to one another in the roles that God designed. (*Psalms 128*)
- III. Your first ministry priority is to fulfill your role in your family.
- A. Wives: To your husband: respect and love. (*Ephesians 5:22-24; Titus 2:4*)
- B. Husbands: To your wife: love and honor. (*Ephesians 5:25-30; Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7*)
1. A husband is responsible to provide for the material needs of the family. (*1 Timothy 5:8; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-10*)
 2. A pastor/leader must be a 'one woman' man. (*1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6*)
 3. A husband is to be devoted to love, honor and understand his wife. (*1 Peter 3:7*)
- C. Parents: To your children: instruct, disciple, model, but do not exasperate. (*Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21*)
- D. Children: To your parents: honor and provide for. (*Ephesians 6:1-2; 1 Timothy 5:3-8*)

Conclusion:

Session 3 Exercise for Married Couples:

If you are married, take time to discuss the following questions:

1. From this session, describe to one another what God's role is for you in your family.
2. Complete this statement to your spouse: "I really appreciate these ways that you fulfill God's role in our family..."
3. Complete this statement to your spouse: "You could help me better fulfill my role in our family by..."
4. Wife: Lovingly and gently suggest to your husband how he might show you greater love and understanding.
5. Husband: Lovingly and gently suggest to your wife how she might show you greater respect and love.
6. Husband and wife: Discuss together how you could improve instructing and training your children to know and follow Christ.
7. Husband and wife: Discuss together any responsibilities to your parents that you need to take care of at this time in their lives.
8. Each of you separately write down your answer to this statement: *"In light of this session, I will trust the Lord to enable me to better fulfill my role in our family by..."*

Session 3 Exercise for Single People:

If you are single, gather with other singles to discuss these questions:

1. From this session, describe to one another what God's role is for you in your family at this time.
2. As you consider future marriage, how would you describe the husband's role in the family? The wife's?
3. What effect on the family have you seen when a husband or wife does not fulfill the role God has called them to?
4. Do you agree or disagree that a wife should have a job outside the home? What are the dangers? What are the benefits?
5. Read Ephesians 6:1-2 and 1 Timothy 5:3-8 again. Describe God's life-long responsibility for you toward your parents

Introduction:

I. What is healthy communication?

- A. Good communication is the healthy exchange of thoughts, messages, or information.
 - 1. We are always communicating through words, the tone of our voice and our body language.
 - 2. The question is, Are we communicating in a way that builds our relationships?
- B. Healthy communication is a learned skill which is the glue to hold our marriage and family together.

II. How do we learn healthy communication?

- A. Commit to communicate well with others in your family. (*Ephesians 4:29-32*)
 - 1. Commit to the Lord. (*Matthew 12:34-36*)
 - 2. Commit to communicate well with each other.
- B. Be Careful to speak
 - 1. Because words are powerful. (*Psalms 141:3; James 5:3-10; Isaiah 50:4*)
 - 2. Because words impact the emotional atmosphere in your relationship. (*Proverbs 15:1*)
 - 3. Because grace and truth always benefit others. (*Proverbs 15:4*)

C. Be Careful to listen

1. Listening is more important for communication than speaking. (*James 1:19*)
2. Listen to fully understand what the other says. (Proverbs 11:12)
3. Listen before you respond. (Proverbs 29:20)

III. Suggestions to help you communicate well.

Conclusion:

Session 4 Exercise for Married Couples:

If you are married, take time to discuss the following:

In your relationship with one another, there are...

1. ...things that you always agree about
(*For example, one couple agrees that attending church is important*).
2. ...things that you do not agree about, but you can discuss together
(*For example, one couple disagrees about how to discipline their children*).
3. ...things that you disagree about but you cannot discuss because it always turns into an unresolved argument. So you simply avoid it or agree to disagree.
(*For example, one couple always argues about how to spend money*).

Individually, write down 2 or 3 items in your relationship under each category.

Then, as a couple, choose one item from Number 2.

Discuss this issue using the following steps:

Step 1: For five minutes the wife shares how she feel about this issue without interruption by the husband.

Step 2: The husband communicates back to the wife what *she* said and how the *she* feels about it. The husband is only trying to understand the *wife's* view without defending or explaining his view. After the wife agrees that the husband understands how she feels, switch roles and repeat Step 1 and Step 2 regarding the same topic from Number 2 with the husband as the speaker and the wife as the listener.

Over the coming weeks, take time together to go through this process with another item from Number 2.

Session 4 Exercise for Single People:

If you are single, gather with other singles to discuss these questions:

1. God gives great guidelines for you to learn in communicating with others. Please gather in groups of 3 or 4 with other singles and read Ephesians 4:25-32 and discuss the following questions:
2. What is one new insight you learn from these verses that will help you to better relate to others?
3. How does God want you to handle anger with another person? Is anger a sin?
4. How do you think the devil gains an opportunity through unresolved anger with others?
5. Give an example of what “corrupting” or “unwholesome” talk might be, verse 29.
6. Give an example of talk that “gives grace” to others.
7. How is the Holy Spirit affected by the way you speak to and treat others?
8. As a result of what you learn from these verses, what difference will it make in the way you speak to others this week?

Introduction:

- I. God designed a married couple to be united in spiritual oneness and unity in their relationship with Him. (*Genesis 1:26-27; 2:15-18*)**
 - A. God's original model for marriage is for a couple to live in spiritual harmony with God.
 - B. They are to be united together in the Lord.
 - C. This spiritual unity in the Lord demonstrates to their children and the world the unity of Christ and His church. (*Ephesians 5:31-33*)
- II. As a married couple we must make it our priority to grow in our relationship and union with Christ in order to enjoy His best for our marriage and ministry.**

Here are practical ways to grow together in your relationship with Christ:

 - A. Resolve conflict and forgive one another. (*Colossians 3:12-15*)
 - B. Pray, worship and share the Word together as a couple. (*Colossians 3:16-17*)
 - C. Encourage one another and keep each other accountable in the Lord. (*Hebrews 10:24-25*)

Conclusion:

- How would you evaluate your individual relationship with the Lord and together as a couple with Him?
- On a scale of 1 to 10 with “10” being the best of an intentional, ongoing, clear, and energized relationship with God - How would you rate your connection to God?

Husband: (circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Wife: (circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

As a Couple: (circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Commit to growing as an individual and as a couple in your relationship with God.

Session 5 Exercise for Married Couples:

If you are married, take time to do the following:

1. Read Ephesians 5:21-32
2. Pray for God to reveal to you what He wants to say to each of you through this passage. If there is a behavior that has been contrary to the teaching of the passage, repent now and pray to God together
3. Make a decision in writing to devote to live according to these instructions for the priority of connecting to God and building your relationship with Him - both as individuals and as a couple.
4. Develop a practical plan for Scripture reading and meditation. Pray and worship together as a couple.

Our Commitment to Grow Together in Our Relationship with God:

Example Devotional Connection Plan:

Step 1: Select a book of Scripture (Psalms, Philippians, etc...) Take a passage that is approximately 5 verses.

Step 2: Read this short passage out loud - Take turns reading each verse.

Step 3: Take a short time to think individually about the text you read. Pray silently that God will reveal to each of you what He wants to say to you from His word.

Step 4: Pray aloud as the Holy Spirit leads each of you.

Step 5: Expand your prayer to take into account your concerns as a couple and as a family. Pray for God to use His word to grow faith and for Him to be actively at work within your household.

NOTE: *It is essential that the Husband take the initiative and be intentional in developing what you hope to achieve together spiritually.*

Session 5 Exercise for Single People:

If you are single, gather with other singles in groups of 3 or less for discussion.

1. Select a leader for your group.
2. Read aloud Ephesians 5:21-32.
3. Discuss each verse after it is read.
4. Discuss the ways a couple can grow together in their relationship with God.
5. If you think you may have a spiritual partner to help you grow in your relationship with God, make specific plans to start a journey of spiritual growth together.

Our Commitment to Grow Together in Our Relationship with God:

Introduction:

I. God created people to fulfill His divine purpose on the earth.

- A. The crown of creation is a human being, designed to reflect God's image on earth. (*Genesis 1:26-27, 3; Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21*)

- B. God's design is for unified teams to carry out this great reconciling purpose.
 - 1. God's plan and purpose has always been accomplished through teams. (*2 Timothy 2:2*)

 - 2. Married couples are also a team for God's purpose . (*Acts 18:2-3; 25-26; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19*).

 - 3. The team is effective only if they are passionately committed to each other and God's purpose of the Great Commission.

II. You, as a married team, are called to intimate unity in the Lord and to His calling for your family.

- A. God desires a passionate fellowship with you as a person.

- B. God desires a passionate fellowship with you as a married couple.

- C. God's purpose for your marriage is not only for the purpose of loving one another and raising godly children, but also to fulfill His Great Commission purposes.

III. How do you grow as a couple in intimate fellowship with God and to fulfill His purposes?
(*If we evaluate growth stages in our spiritual life after meeting Christ, we can see distinct steps that mark each stage*):

- A. Holiness occurs in us when we make the decision to fully devote ourselves to Jesus and His ways.
- B. Spiritual Health occurs in us when we yield to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to work in all the different areas of our life.
- C. Calling is produced in us when our understanding is clarified by the Word and we realize that we exist for His purpose. (*Matthew 28:18-20*)
- D. Conviction of being called is produced in us when we listen to God speak to us about serving Him and His Work.
- E. Commitment to the call is produced in us when we feel the call and then commit ourselves before God.
- F. Consecration occurs in us when we dedicate our lives completely for the purpose of God and in His infinite mercy to allow us to serve Him.
- G. Destiny is produced in us when we understand that the *only reason* for our existence is to glorify God in what we do, and now we live for the accomplishment of His purpose for our lives, in expectation that we will hear from his lips, "*Good and faithful servant ...*"

IV. Joy, fulfillment, unity and intimacy result when you, as a couple, dedicate yourselves to fulfill Jesus' Great Commission.

- A. We must be serious about God's call for us as a couple for His purposes on the earth.
- B. You can alleviate many problems in marriage when you are unified in Christ and His purpose.
- C. Joy and fulfillment results when you work together as a team to fulfill His Great Commission.

Conclusion:

- Will you dedicate yourselves as a couple today to fulfill Jesus' Great Commission?

Session 6 Exercise for Married Couples:

If you are married, take time to discuss the following:

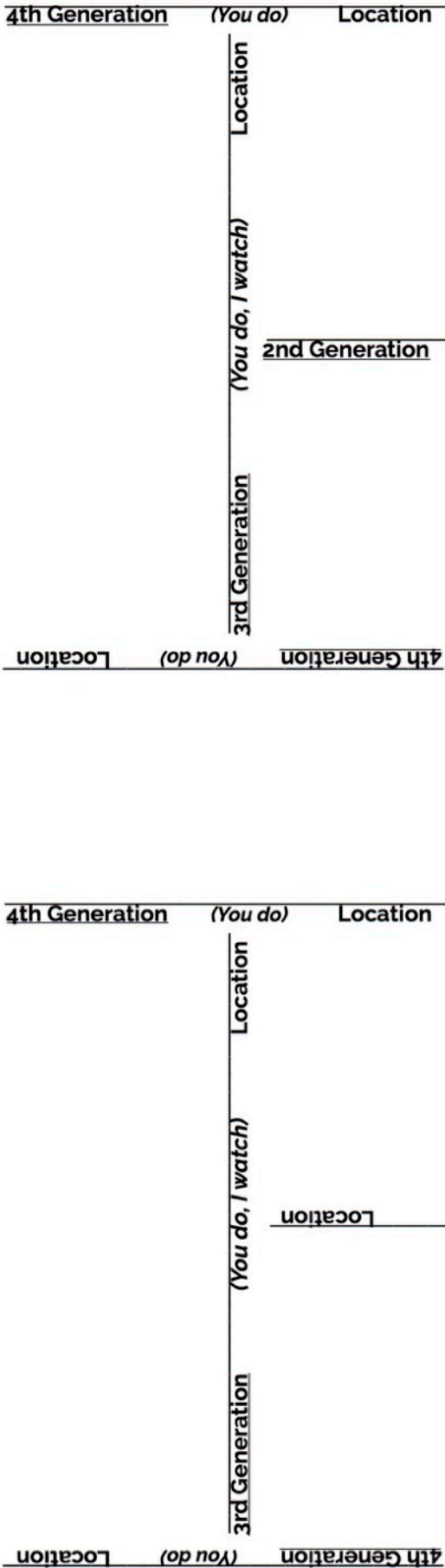
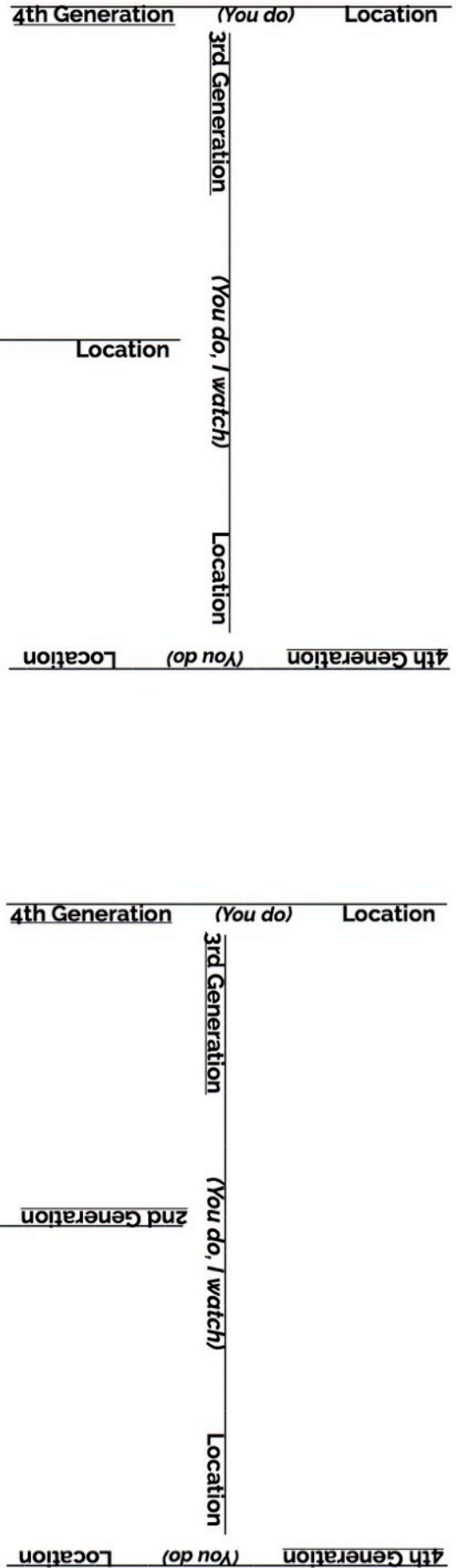
1. As a couple, reflect on and evaluate how you are involved in God's purpose of the Great Commission:
Write your conclusion here:
2. Pray together to God together and ask Him to clarify how you can work as a team to reach a lost world.
3. Pray to God and evaluate how you are doing as a couple in the seven steps of spiritual growth.
 - A. Holiness
 - B. Spiritual Health
 - C. Calling
 - D. Conviction of being called
 - E. Commitment to the call
 - F. Consecration
 - G. Destiny
4. Discuss together what stage best describes you as a couple and what the "next step" would be to advance in your spiritual growth.
5. If you have a specific call, discuss with your wife/husband details of this call. What specific group of people. What place?, etc..
6. Develop a plan together to start or improve the work of making disciples that multiply along with others who are part of that calling. (Use the 10 Steps to reach your nation for Christ as a guideline)
7. Present your plan before God with dates and responsibilities of each one and dedicate your life to this purpose

Session 6 Exercise for Single People:

If you are single, gather into groups of 3 or 4 to discuss these questions:

1. Discuss with each where you think you are at this point in your life in the 7 stages of spiritual growth.
2. Do you have a specific call from God to reach a certain group of people in your city or region? Pray together for that call.
3. Take into account your current relationship with a member of the opposite sex, if you have one. Discuss openly if you feel that person has the same call to serve Christ that you have. Why do you think it is important to have the same calling from God before you marry?
4. For those who have no present relationship with another, pray that God will lead you to the right person who has the same call.
5. Review and discuss what it would mean for you to develop a plan for carrying out the call that comes from God

MINISTRY MAP



STATEMENT OF FAITH

GOD

Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24, 10:30; 2 Corinthians 13:14

We believe that there is one true, holy God, eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - each of whom possesses equally all the attributes of deity and the characteristics of personality. In the beginning God created out of nothing the world and all the things therein, thus manifesting the glory of His power, wisdom and goodness. By His sovereign power He continues to sustain His creation. By His providence He is operating throughout history to fulfill His redemptive purposes.

JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 20:28; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; 1 John 2:2

Jesus Christ is the eternal second Person of the Trinity who was united forever with a true human nature by a miraculous conception and virgin birth. He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father and voluntarily atoned for (made a payment for) the sins of all by dying on the cross as their substitute, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation and eternal life for all who trust in Him alone. He rose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He lived and died. He ascended to heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father, where He, the only Mediator between God and man, continually makes intercession for His own. He shall come again to earth, personally and visibly, to consummate history and the eternal plan of God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT and THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

John 15:26, 16:8-11

The natural accompaniment of a genuine saving relationship with Jesus Christ is a life of holiness and obedience, attained by believers as they submit to the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity. He was sent into the world by the Father and the Son to apply to mankind the saving work of Christ. He enlightens the minds of sinners, awakens in them a recognition of their need of a Savior and regenerates them (gives them new life). At the point of salvation He permanently indwells every believer to become the source of assurance, strength and wisdom, and He uniquely endows each believer with gifts for the building up of the body. The Holy Spirit guides believers in understanding and applying the Scripture. His power and control are applied by faith, making it possible for the believer to lead a life of Christlike character and to bear fruit to the glory of the Father.

THE BIBLE

2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21

The sole basis of our belief is the Bible, composed of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament. We believe that the Scripture in its entirety originated with God, and that it was given through the instrumentality of chosen men. Scripture thus one and at the same time speaks with the authority of God and reflects the backgrounds, styles and vocabularies of the human authors. We hold that the Scriptures are infallible and without error in the original manuscripts. They are the unique, full and final authority on all matters of faith and practice, and there are no other writings similarly inspired by God.

SALVATION

Romans 3:23; 5:8; Ephesians 2:1, 8-9

The central purpose of God's revelation in Scripture is to call all people into fellowship with Himself. Originally created to have fellowship with God, man defied God, choosing to go his independent way, and was thus alienated from God and suffered the corruption of his nature, rendering him unable to please God. The fall of man took place at the beginning of human history, and all individuals since have suffered these consequences and are thus in need of the saving grace of God. The salvation of mankind is, then, wholly a work of God's free grace, not the result, in whole or in part of human works or goodness, and must be received by faith on an individual basis. When God has begun a saving work in the heart of any person, He gives assurance in His Word that He will continue performing it until the day of its full consummation.

HUMAN DESTINY

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Hebrews 9:27

Death seals the eternal destiny of each person. For all mankind, there will be a resurrection of the body into the spiritual world, and a judgment that will determine the fate of each individual. There is an eternal state of punishment for the unsaved and an eternal state of blessing for the saved. Those who have trusted Christ will be received into eternal communion with God and will be rewarded for works done in life.

THE CHURCH

Acts 2:42; Romans 12:1-6

The result of union with Jesus Christ is that all believers become members of His body, the church. There is one true church universal, comprised of all those who have trusted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The Scripture commands believers to gather together to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, observance of baptism and communion as the ordinances established by Jesus Christ, fellowship, service to the body through development and use of talents and gifts, and outreach to the world. Wherever God's people meet regularly in obedience to this command, there is the local expression of the church. Under the watch care of elders and other supportive leadership, its members are to work together in love and unity, intent upon the ultimate purpose of exalting Christ for the glory of God and the fulfillment of Christ's Great Commission.

FAITH and PRACTICE

1 Corinthians 10:24, 31; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Scripture is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. We recognize that it cannot bind the conscience of individuals in areas where Scripture is silent. Rather, each believer is to be led in those areas by the Lord, to whom he or she alone is ultimately responsible.



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