

Small Group Discussion Guide--Some questions may have come from "Change and Your Relationships: A Mess Worth Making"

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## Opening Question

Is there someone in your life you would like to rewire? What is it about that person you love that makes them so frustrating?

## Book Discussion

Q1: How does the author define “identity” and “worship”? (p. 56) How are these “foundation stones” relevant to our discussion on relationships?

Page 56 “The Bible reminds us that God wants — and deserves — to be the defining center of both these things.” Page 58-59 “Either I get my identity vertically, out of a sense of who God is and who He has made me in Christ, or I will seek to get my identity horizontally, out of my circumstances, relationships, and successes.”

Q2: What *tends* to define people’s identity and worship? Why is it so critical that we let God be the “defining center” of them?

Page 59 “Much of the disappointment and heartache we experience is the result of our attempts to get something from our relationships that we already have in Christ.

Personal Reflection: What evidence is there that you are looking to your relationships to give you things you have already been given in Christ?

Page 60 “Worship is first an identity before it becomes an activity. That is, you and I are worshipers, which is why we worship. Our hearts are always under the control of something, and whatever controls your heart will control your behavior....In Matthew 6, Christ explains that whatever we worship will become the thing that controls us. He uses a wonderful word to explain the connection: ‘treasure.’”

Q3: If this is true, what are the implications for why we do what we do (why we respond to a situation/relationship the way we do)?

The authors say that if we are to love others as we should we must worship God as Creator, as Sovereign, and as Savior (Pages 61-64).

Q4: Which of these three strikes you the most as it relates to loving others? Why?

Page 71 "Language is not a human invention to be used in whatever way serves our interests. If God is the first speaker, then language is His creation. This means that our ability to speak was given to us by the Creator and it exists for His glory." Page 72 "One of our greatest mistakes in communication is to take words as our own to use as we please."

Q5: Regarding relationships, what are the implications of language existing for God's glory?

Page 72 In Luke 6:45, Jesus says, "out of the overflow of the heart his mouth speaks." "[Jesus] is asking us to own the connection between our thoughts, desires, and words. The real problem with your communication is *what* you want to say and *why* you want to say it, which ultimately has nothing to do with your language skills. Christ reveals that the *what* and the *why* are shaped by the heart. Therefore, if we hope to transform the way we talk with one another, the heart must change first."

Q6: Where does Jesus put the cause of what you say? Outside of you or inside of you? How does what happens outside of you relate to what happens inside of you?

Page 73 Read 2 Cor 5:20.

Q7: What is God's agenda for our relationships? What are the implications of being God's ambassadors on our words and relationships?

Page 74 "Speaking as an ambassador is not about using biblical words; it's about speaking with a biblical agenda."

Q8: What does communicating with a biblical agenda look like in everyday conversations?

# Bible Discussion

Read 2 Cor 5:20.

Q1: What job description does Paul assign to us?

Q2: How is that job description significant in our relationship with God? and in our communication with others?

Q3: According to this passage, what is God trying to accomplish through us?

Read Prov 18:21.

Q4: How can words kill? How can words give life?

Read Luke 6:45.

Q5: According to Jesus, our words come from where? Why is this significant?

Have you ever said, "Oops, I didn't mean to say that"? Would it be more accurate to say, "I'm sorry I said what I meant"?

Q6: What then is the real problem when our words create conflict?

Read Eph 4:29-30

What would it look like to communicate as God's ambassador?

## Prayer Focus

Page 75 "When you and I speak as mini-kings to get our own way, our words are unhelpful and untimely. Not only do we hurt and grieve other people, we also grieve the Lord. This kind of talk

completely obstructs what He wants to do in and through us in our relationships. Here is where we all must remember that our relationships have been designed as workrooms for redemption, not shelters for human happiness. If we are ever going to give grace when we talk, we need grace to free us from our bondage to ourselves so that our words may be liberated to be used by God.”