

## Relational Discipleship

### Small Group Leaders Summit - November 2022

- 1.) We are most influenced by “my people,” those who make us feel most “known and loved.”**

A Healthy Church Culture: where everyone can experience being “known and loved.”

- 2.) We were made to be fully known and loved by God and others.**

*“And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.” (Genesis 2:25)*

- 3.) Sin causes us to cover and hide rather than risk being known and loved.**  
**(Genesis 3:1-8)**

- 4.) God invites us to come out of hiding to experience being known and loved.**  
**(Genesis 3:1-13)**

*“But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”<sup>10</sup> He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”<sup>11</sup> And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”<sup>12</sup> “The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”<sup>13</sup> Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”*

- a. “Where are you?” (v. 9)
- b. “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree...?” (v. 11)
- c. “What is this that YOU have done?” (v. 13)

- 5.) We experience being known and loved by sharing our stories with loving and attuned people.**

- a. Sharing our stories enables us to experience healing.

*“...those parts of us that feel most broken and that we keep most hidden are the parts that most desperately need to be known by God, so as to be loved and healed...We can love God, love ourselves or love others only to the degree that we are known by God and known by others...To be fully loved—and to fully love—requires that we are fully known.”*

- b. Sharing our stories changes our perspective on our past and our expectations of the future.

*“You construct your understanding of the world and your place in it through the lens of your own story. And the manner and context in which you reflect on your story (in your mind) or tell your story (to others) become part of the fabric of the narrative itself. In other words, the process of reflecting on and telling others your story, and the way you experience others hearing it, actually shapes the story and the very neural correlates, or networks, it represents.”*

*“The very act of narrating your experiences changes your perception of the experiences, allowing them to provide a loving connection that will bring growth and healing.”*

## **6.) Create environments where people can be “known and loved” by practicing S.A.L.\_\_.T.**

- a. Start conversations so people can tell their stories.
- b. Ask Questions.
- c. Listen. Really Listen. (Romans 12:15)

*...the speaker’s own neurophysiologic state begins to change, as his or her brain feels felt by others. This initiates a greater level of neural network integration within the speaker, and with this comes less anxiety. Furthermore, having taken this risk, the person feels less alone in the story, for telling it now includes awareness of others’ emotional acceptance of what is being felt...the speaker collects a new set of memories of what it means to live vulnerably with others. He or she begins to live not only as if “I will be okay” in the future when taking this kind of risk, but also lives in the present moment as if “I am okay.”*

## Practice Incarnational Listening (A.I.R.)

- Attend: to the person who is sharing.

Exercise: Turn to one person near you. Take turns sharing what you did this morning from the time you woke up. Listeners, attend to the speaker as best as you can as they share. When I say “now” turn away from the person.

- Invite: them to reflect and share deeper.
- Respond: to make them “feel felt.”

Exercise: Pair up with someone. Take turns responding to the question, “what is your greatest challenge right now?” Listeners, practice the principles we discussed above. Speakers, make mental notes of how the listeners made you feel as you shared. After 10 minutes, speakers give feedback to listeners for 3 minutes. Share how the listeners made you feel as you shared. What did the listeners do well to make you feel “known and loved?”

d. Pray for them. (James 5:16)

*“Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.”*

e. Tell the truth.