

The Posture (part)1

...the One and Only, who came from the father, **full of grace and truth**. - John 1:14

At your tables:

1. How'd the homework go from last week? You were supposed to try UP, IN, or OUT. If you forgot, please share why?
2. Share a time when you got the answer right but the way you did it was all wrong.

Session 1 - Grace and Truth

Intro: Our calling, wants, & core convictions serve as our foundation - this is the “umbrella” under which we live. But the way we live under this umbrella matters. A good weight trainer doesn't just tell you what to do, he helps you with the posture behind what you are doing [show some cases of bad weight lifting techniques]. He knows you can actually do the right things but from the wrong posture and miss the whole point.

Posture matters because the Father says it matters - over and over again. The center of your leadership is your life in God and the center of God is love.

As children of a really good dad we should be living **from** the love of the Father and not **for** the love of the Father. One is the picture of resting and the other the picture of working.

When we think about love our mind tends to think of scenarios where love is easy. We are all good at love when it sort of just happens. But what about real life? What about when life gets hard, things get chaotic, kids don't listen, people are mean - how do you stay in your posture when the world around you seems to be continually pulling you out.

Jeremiah 17:5-8, “ This is what the Lord says: “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord. That person will be like a bush in the wastelands; they will not see prosperity when it comes. They will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives. “But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him 8 They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”

Hebrew word for bush – arar – cursed bush.

The arar tree is cursed because it gives off an appearance that it is not as it is.

In the middle of the desert one would find this fruit and think they had hit the jackpot. It was green and smelled fresh but upon opening it the arar tree made a “ptt” sound – and inside you didn’t find lush fruit good for eating, you found this milky cobweb like substance that was good for nothing.

The problem with the arar tree was its roots. In the middle of the desert this tree had very shallow roots unable to get enough nutrients to finish the production of fruit - it had the appearance of fruit but lacked the life sustaining nutrients of fruit.

The beautiful tree described in the very next verse doesn't have that same issue. No matter the circumstances this tree produces abundant fruit and is good for everything because its roots go down deep – enabling it to synch with the nutrients necessary for the life promised.

How we posture ourselves is directly linked to how we root ourselves.

This is what we see in Jesus - Jesus was full of grace and truth - He was full of it - all the time - to be full of something is to be overflowing. Glass isn’t full until it’s pouring over the rim.

The Father hasn’t called us to live a balanced life- teetering back and forth between grace and truth - He’s called us to be full of grace and truth.

We don’t need more grace for this conversation and more truth for that one - we simply must be full.

Love doesn’t try to be one or the other - it’s this interesting, un-separtable blend of both.

In order to help us visualize what grace and truth actually looks like - we’ve created a matrix - the grace and truth matrix. Let’s start by talking about what grace and truth isn’t.

Call Out - Truth without Grace

When we are committed to truth but live with little grace.

Life is about doing the right things and getting them done right and the best thing I can do for you is, tell you what you are doing wrong and help you get yourself in line.

Usually pursuing some kind of external goal and leveraging power to bring others into line so they can contribute toward the end goal.

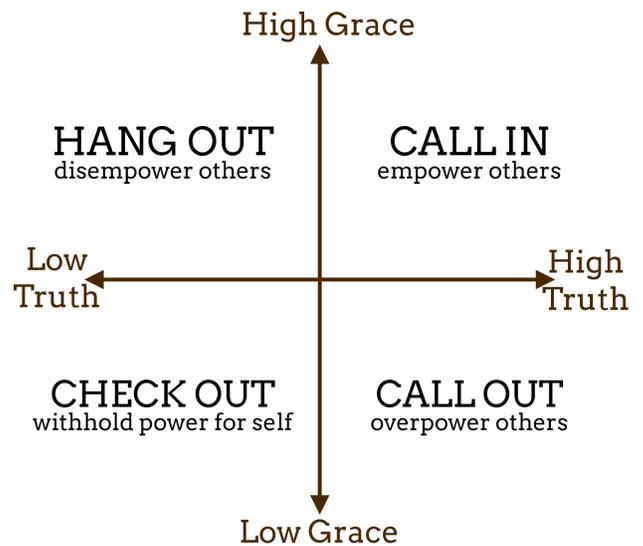
Achieving that goal is the main thing, so relational damage, though sad, is unavoidable. Think sports team bent on winning.

When we have to be the best, win and move the ball forward at all cost - we call out. We call ourselves out, call each other out - we get obsessed with noticing sin and error.

The lie here is often, the worse we feel the better we will grow.

In the end - call out culture overpowers and disconnects everyone.

The truth isn't Jesus truth that sets us free - it's shadow truth that binds us up and weighs us down.



Hang Out - Grace without truth

When we are committed to grace but hesitate to speak the truth to one another we create a Hang Out Culture.

The highest concern in a hang out culture is that everyone gets along above the surface. That there is no conflict and no one feels uncomfortable. And anything that might come up that could lead this way is managed away or avoided altogether.

Hang out culture is so concerned with keeping everyone together that we will let things go, avoid hard conversations and falsely stay connected.

Preserving the peace is of the utmost importance and because of this truth telling is hardly ever done. Instead of communicating honestly in love, triangulation and passive aggressive behavior become the way we survive.

If call out culture demands compliance from children then hang out culture just wants them to be happy.

The result is unhealthy, toxic relationships that are often codependent.

I need you to be at peace with me. I need you to like me and so I will do whatever it takes to make sure you are happy.

If call out posture creates a culture of performance and hiding, then hang out culture creates a culture of pleasing and pretending.

The thing with pleasing and pretending is the only peace we ever experience is false peace and so we will always feel a little off centered in our love.

Check Out - no grace and no truth

Call out and Hang Out culture actually take a tremendous amount of energy to maintain. Everything we do in these two cultures we are doing to position ourselves in a way that feels like Jesus. And it will always be impossible to work our way into the right posture. Eventually they both lead us to check out.

We retreat from relationships and goals and simply seek to survive

Check out culture is all about self preservation. Instead of overpowering others or disempowering them, we simply seek to preserve power for ourselves as our way of making sure we are okay.

We hide, medicate, numb and disconnect into a false reality.

Many leaders - exhausted after a long week of call out or hang out, check out as their only way to survive. This check out is not a rest that reconnects us to those we love. There is no refreshment through check out.

Sometimes we visit check out for brief stints of time and other seasons it can be a place where we live. We can survive by living numb to the conflict within our marriage, we can live numb to the contention within our churches. We can live numb to the disconnection with our kids.

Check out enables us to survive in a false reality.

Call In - Grace and Truth

Grace - God's ability to be with us right where we actually are. Grace is not his answer for our sin - that was Jesus - grace is his answer to the presence problem we have.

God centered grace enables us to also meet people right where they actually are. Without needing them to change or shift, but simply inviting them to be.

Truth - Jesus truth sees more than just what is wrong - it sets people free

Call out uses truth as a weapon - its goal to win, prove oneself right and divide and conquer. It's heavy and full of "ought to" and "should have". It overpowers and controls.

Jesus truth is about seeing people as God sees them (not just what's wrong with them) and calling them in love to live out their true identity in Christ. It's about vision, empowerment and brings with it so much hope.

Truth is about naming and living in reality as God sees it. It sets others free instead of binding them up. **Henry Cloud, "Just as grace is the relational aspect of God's character, truth is the structural aspect of his character."**

So here's the deal - our responsibility in leadership and in life is to live centered in love.

We spend way too much time worrying about where others are living and far too little time aware of our own posture.

My invitation - to live highly aware of my posture - because how I posture myself determines how I lead others into proper alignment.

This isn't something you do for them - this is something you do for you and the fullness of it will overflow into them.

Thermostat vs. Thermometer

What it means to be a thermostat - who sets and steadies our temperature? Nothing has the power to govern our temperature unless we give it the power

Feelings make really bad drivers but they are fairly decent passengers - They will always drive us right out of grace and truth. They are known for making their case and justifying their stance. They aren't wrong - they just show us what's off- centered.

Jesus had feelings - but he governed them. He told his feelings what he was going to do and they followed his lead. **Dallas Willard, "discipleship is about spending time with Jesus to learn from Jesus how to be like Jesus."**

The more we align ourselves in the posture of grace and truth, the more we will recognize those moments this world pulls us out of it

It's really about awareness - when we can learn to live aware we can learn to posture ourselves in grace and truth.

EXERCISE: What's your pattern?

- 1) Write down which culture you tend to land in the majority of the time: Hang Out, Call Out, Check Out, or Call Up. Write down why.
- 2) Share at your tables.

Homework: *Pick One of these scenarios and describe what “Hang Out culture” looks like and what “Call Out culture” looks like.*

1) - Parenting - Your high school daughter has been lying to you about where she was last Friday night. She told you she was with a friend but you found out she was not at that friend's house. When you asked her about it she lied again and doubled down on that lie. How do you punish her?

2) - Team Leading - You have an employee who has consistently been failing over and over again. You have been coaching him and trying to help him but he doesn't seem to take instructions well and he seems to not care very much about his performance. You need him to either decide he wants to work for you or move on to another role.

3) - Evangelism - You have been sharing your faith with a neighbor for the last few years. You go over to their home for dinner and after dinner he shares with you that he believes that every religion leads to Jesus and that as long as you are doing good in the world then you know Jesus. He shares that he doesn't believe that God would ever judge anyone. How would you talk to him?

4) - Small Group leader - You have a new member to your close knit small group. She is a single mom who is obviously in a bit of crisis mode. She dominates all of the conversation and brings her daughter who she doesn't watch or parent during the session. So she and her daughter are distracting the group. How do you set some boundaries without alienating her?

5) - Family - You are at thanksgiving dinner with your family and your older brother begins to argue constantly about politics. He has crazy views that are so different from yours and he keeps sharing information that is not factual and is 100% untrue. Everyone at the table is uncomfortable or arguing. What do you do?

6) - Marriage - You are out to dinner with your spouse with a group of friends and your spouse makes a joke about you that deeply hurts your feelings. You find yourself thinking about it and being angry all night. Although you don't say anything in the moment. When you try to discuss it your spouse minimizes it and says it was not a big deal.