

LIFE Group Leader Handout

January 24, 2016

The Secret to an Enduring Love

Pastor Mike O'Connor

Scripture— 1 Timothy 1:5 ESV

The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Main Idea—Love's Tripod is a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith

Love Myths—

- #1 Love is easy--just find the right person.
- #2 Attraction is the action
- #3 Love stands alone.

Love's Tripod—

-a pure heart—the each relationship: the relationship occupies the place that God has designed this relationship to have in our hearts

-a good conscience—toward God and man. Acts 24:16, Paul speaking: *So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.*

We are fulfilling our God-given responsibilities, we are asking forgiveness when we have sinned, and we are not harboring unforgiveness toward others.

Note: conscience is not an infallible guide—it can be too strict or too lenient (see I Timothy 4:1-2)

-a sincere faith—we are believing God for His best and accessing His power to love the way we need to

Application—

- *In what ways did God use this message to re-focus you on the priority of love for Him and for one another?*
- *Which of the legs of your tripod is shorter or weaker and needs your attention? (pure heart, good conscience, sincere faith)*

FOUR VOICES IN EVERY GROUP CONVERSATION

By David Francis

Transformation is fueled by conversation in the context of community. Creating conversational community is the ongoing challenge of the group leader. When it is done well, you will hear four “voices” during the conversation. All four are required for conversation to produce transformation.

The Leader. Every leader has something to say. The research findings reported in Transformational Discipleship were summarized in what the authors called “The Transformational Sweet Spot”. That sweet spot was the intersection of Truth delivered by a growing, godly leader and received by a learner who was in a posture of vulnerability--spiritually and emotionally open to hearing the truth. The voice of the leader is critical. It just can't be the only one. Or maybe even the most dominant one.

The Learners. Each member of a group has a voice. If we will listen. Many people don't hear what others have to say because their concept of listening is “waiting for my turn to talk”. Listening--really listening--is a discipline. It is often evidenced by questions. “How did that make you feel?” “What happened next?” “Has anyone had a similar experience?”. You are really listening when you find yourself in a posture to be persuaded. The evidence of that is rarely-heard expressions like these: “Hmmm, I've never thought of it that way.” “Wow. You may be right about that!”.

The Bible. In a Bible study group, the Bible itself has a voice. That's why it is called the “Word of God.” In fact, our main goal should be to strive to understand what it is “saying” to us. Not what we want it to say. Not what we wish it said. But what it actually said to its first readers in their contexts as well as what it says to us right now in ours. That's not the same thing as everybody sharing their opinion about what it says. When we strive to hear the voice of the Bible together, our goal is to help each other grapple with what it really says--and then call each other to obedience.

The Holy Spirit. Leaders help learners. Learners help each other. And fortunately, we also have another Helper. The Holy Spirit comes alongside us to help us understand what God is saying through the various voices in our group. His voice is described in Scripture as “still” and “small”. If we will only listen for His voice, He will guide us into truth. In fact, in order to hear His voice, we may sometimes need to quiet the other three. Try this every once in a while: Ask a discussion question, then ask everyone to ponder it silently for 45 seconds before anyone speaks. Except the One with the still small voice. It will be worth the wait!