

## T Cell Training #4

### I. Introduction

- A. This class is about how we can help each other become more like Jesus.
  - 1. We began by emphasizing the need for spiritual growth.
  - 2. Then we talked about the role of biblical friendships in the process of spiritual growth.
  - 3. And now we are talking about how to develop those kinds of friendships.
- B. The goal is not just to give you a three step plan. But we do want to give you some help thinking about where to start.

### II. Build a relationship.

- A. Last week we tried to put an exclamation point on the importance of relationships by looking at God and how He works with us. We are representing God and God is a relational God and relationship is a key part of how He changes us.
  - 1. “Consider the way Christ works in our own lives. Scripture uses three words to describe his work: justification, adoption and sanctification. Justification and adoption explain how we enter into a relationship with God. In justification by faith, God declares me to be righteous based on the perfect life, death and resurrection of Christ. In justification, Christ’s righteousness is legally credited to my account. Justification removes the sin that separates me from God and gives me Christ’s righteousness, making me acceptable to God and enabling me to have a relationship with Him. Adoption involves my relationship with God. God not only justifies me, he adopts me, he welcomes me into his family with all the rights and privileges of a son. Justification and adoption give me a full and complete relationship with God. As a result of justification and adoption, am I okay? This is a bit of a trick question. If you are talking about my standing or relationship with God, the answer is yes. Nothing needs to be added to Jesus’ work. I don’t need anything else to secure God’s acceptance. It is a gift of His grace. But if you are talking about my condition as a person, the answer is no. I still struggle with sin daily, and radical change still needs to take place in me, so that I can be and do what God has planned. Unlike justification and adoption, which are events, this work of personal transformation is a process - a process called sanctification. Sanctification is the process by which God actually makes me what he legally declared me to be in justification - holy. This framework sheds light on the ministry God has given each one of us. God doesn’t justify and adopt me because I am okay, but precisely because I am not okay. He knows that lasting change will take place in

me only when I am in a living personal relationship with Him. In his magnificent love, he makes that relationship a reality. Only those who have a relationship with God through justification and adoption will undergo the radical change process of progressive sanctification. Without the relationship, there is no personal change. **Our relationship with God is the beginning of our salvation, not the end, a necessity, not a luxury. As Christ's ambassadors, we too, must begin by building relationships of love, grace, and trust with others. Like the relationship God established with us through Christ, the relationships we build provide the context for his continuing work of change.**"

B. Today, I want to talk about one key quality that you need to demonstrate if you are going to develop relationships that help people change, and to get you thinking about what we are going to talk about, let me ready you a counseling case my father often uses as an example. It's about a lady named Clara.

1. "Clara came to her pastor stating that she has filed for divorce on the grounds of mental and bodily cruelty. Today she returns for the third session. 'I tried to get him here, but he had other things to do.'" She begins. "You know what his other things are of course. I told you all of them." "I don't want to hear such charges behind Marty's back," her pastor responds. "This continuing hostility toward him, even though you told him you forgave him, seems to indicate you made little or no attempt to bury the issue and start afresh. I don't think that you understand forgiveness. You..." "Forgive him! You know there is a limit. After he has beat me, and his drinking away our money maybe, but when I came home and found him with another woman, I can never bury that. He is just an immature, animalistic pig," she declares. Her pastor tells her that it will be necessary for her to change her language about her husband and that he is here here to help but not to salve her self-righteous attitude and listen to her ever increasing charges against her husband. "Why are you siding with him? I'm the one who belongs to this church". She breaks into tears.

a) What went wrong? Did anything go wrong?

2. Here is how my father diagnoses the problem: "The counselor in Clara's case failed because he was too problem oriented in his approach. Apparently he had done little to establish involvement with his counselee. He had not endeavored to build a relationship with her that would assure her of his concern. He could have taken time to listen to hear and sympathize with the pain she was experiencing, but instead, he jumped right in and addressed her sin. Almost immediately Clara viewed him as an enemy or opponent rather than an ally. And as long as she viewed her counselor this way, his counsel would mean little to her. His words might be truthful and appropriate to her situation, but she would reject them."

C. If you want to build relationships that help people change, you need to work on building a caring relationship with that person. And you know where that begins? That begins with actually caring. So that's what we want to talk about right now, caring, compassion.

1. What we mean:

- a) Romans 12:15
- b) Philippians 2:1-4
- c) 1 Peter 3:8

2. Why this is important:

- a) Compassion is a command.
  - (1) Colossians 3:12ff
  - (2) 1 Peter 1:22
- b) Compassion is a key characteristic of the people we are supposed to imitate.
  - (1) Paul
    - (a) 1 Thessalonians 2:7-9
  - (2) Jesus
    - (a) We serve a Savior whose heart was broken by the needs of people and whose body was broken for their good and something is broken in our hearts if we say we are passionate about the truth while being uncompassionate towards people.
    - (b) "If then we think we are approved by God and love does not reign in us, we deceive ourselves. The world may applaud us, but our whole life will be utterly loathsome, until love is established in our hearts, so that she governs, and we tend always to that end, yes, and perform all our works by her. Now then, seeing that love is the true perfection of the faithful and of God's children, let us see what it consists of. For if a man boasts that he has it, and in the meanwhile has neither lowliness, nor gentleness, nor patience, he makes the Holy Spirit a liar, who not without reason shows what is signified by charity or love. For he has not set down the bare word and simply said, be loving, but he has also shown us what is meant by it."
- c) A lack of compassion is a worship problem.

3. How do you grow in compassion?

- a) Ephesians 4:32-5:2
  - b) You simply will not find people who are gripped with a sense of their own unworthiness before God and who are overwhelmed with gratitude for their forgiveness by God who are not also extremely gracious and compassionate and forgiving and loving people themselves.
4. And what are some practical steps you can take to demonstrating compassion?
- a) Learn to treat other people like people instead of like projects.
  - b) Don't speak to those you are trying to help as if they don't know anything about what they are going through.
  - c) Think about more than just what you are going to say to people who are hurting – think about to whom you are saying it.
  - d) Make sure you are speaking words that are biblically true in a manner that is biblically appropriate.
  - e) Refuse to use your speech to tear others down.
  - f) Practice speaking in loving, gracious, and gentle ways.
  - g) Take time to pray with people who are hurting.
  - h) Make sure you are willing to learn from people who are suffering.
  - i) Make it clear to the people to whom you are ministering that you love them and that God does, too.
  - j) Surround yourself with people who are compassionate, and be humble enough to learn from them how to relate to others.