

GC Leaders All-Hands Training

The Divine Space & Attachment

Saturday, March 16th

“Before God will do something through you, he first does something to you. He wants to give you the gift of repentance and then call you to surrender your life to him afresh.

Let's start with you and God.

Are you lovingly attaching to God in life-giving ways?

Are you making space for God to meet with you and remind you of how deeply loved you are by him?

Do you need to repent from wrong thoughts or beliefs about God?

Do you have any other gods before God in your life that you are entrusting yourself to or looking to for your ultimate hope?

Are there any practices that you need to re-engage in afresh?

Do you need to block out a regular time for silence and solitude?”

(from **One Eighty: A Return to Disciple-Making** by Jeff Vanderstelt)

The Dream for 2024...

- **Plant 1-2 new GCs**
- **Emphasize leader health**
 - striving —> thriving
 - discipleship of the whole person
 - attaching to God

Are we healthy?

- **Take stock of your life....**

- time/routine—do you have margin/space in your life?
- relational—are you known and loved intimately? do you know others?
- thought life—what consumes your mental space? do you have mental clarity?
- emotional—can you feel appropriately within the full spectrum of emotions?
- physical (sleep/exercise/nutrition/sex)—are you taking care of your body? for healthy reasons?
- financial—are you generous? responsible?

5 Key Relational Spaces

(Absalom & Harrington; Myers; Hall)

- **Public Space (70+ people)**—shared experience, inspired together
- **Social Space (~20-70)**—outsiders welcomed in, potential friends identified
- **Personal Space (~10-20)**—close circle we feel comfortable with, genuine depth
- **Transparent Space (us + a few key others)**—truest image of self and God revealed
- **Divine Space (us and God)**—relationally and emotionally experiencing God



CROWDS

SEVENTY-TWO

TWELVE

THREE

FATHER

What do these spaces look like for you?

What space do you find yourself in most often?

Where are you most comfortable?

Where are you least comfortable?

Is there a divine space in your life?

What does it look like?

How does time with the Father inform the others?

The Divine Space

Attaching to God

- Attachment theory—John Bowlby & Mary Ainsworth
- Humans are hardwired for connection—“survival of the most nurtured”
 - Dependence on caregivers for survival
- Power of attunement/bids for connection, repair
 - cries, coos, expressions → still face experiment
- Secure base → primed for resilience and risk-taking
- “Neurons that fire together wire together” → limbic system
- Internal working model of self, others, and world
- Secure vs. insecure attachment

Attachment

Vertical & Horizontal Implications

- Research shows attachment strategies are consistent into adulthood!
 - Romantic relationships
 - Peer relationships
- Secure vs. insecure
 - anxious—clingy, fearful of abandonment, needing to please/perform, “Are you mad at me?”
 - avoidant—dismissive, independent, fearful of intimacy
 - disorganized—mix of above, push/pull dynamic, more dysregulated, distrustful
- God as the ultimate attachment figure— connection —> rupture —> repair —> security
- I know the right answer, BUT...”

“Not surprisingly, therefore, our patterns of attachment deeply influence the way we experience our relationship with God. For he has to deal with the same brain that we do; he engages the same proclivities we have for avoiding or being anxious about the intimacy of relationships. It is not as if we get to put our brains, which are wired in a particular way through our attachment patterns, on the shelf and somehow draw on a separate one when it comes to dealing with God. He comes to the same set of neural networks that our friends, parents, spouse, children or enemies do.”

*–Curt Thompson,
The Soul of Shame*

“Are you there for me?”

- *Are you near?*
- *Are you trustworthy?*
- *Are you able?*
- *Are you good?*
- *Are you loving?*
- *Are you present?*
- *Are you responsive?*

Healing Attachment

- We can change! Neuroplasticity, sanctification...
- It is visceral experience, not information, that is impactful
- Earned security—in the divine and transparent spaces
 - Confession truly is healing!
- Challenge: visceral cycle of attachment wounding
 - Avoidance/dismissal, distrust, hiding, busyness, anxiety, lashing out, performing/pleasing
- *How have you been wounded?*

“Salvation is not just about getting back on the right side of God’s mercy through judicial acquittal; it’s about having your soul healed by God’s loving touch. Ironically, the same sin that keeps us from relationship with God can be healed only by God. Yet again, we need to be saved.”

John Mark Comer

Why does this matter?

- Not to vilify our parents
- Not to categorize ourselves
- To be aware of how our wounds affect our relationships
- To be aware of how our wounds shape our view/experience of the Father
- To consider the attachment histories of those in our care
- To rejoice in the Father's love for us

Rethinking the Divine Space

- Not a place to check off boxes or gain information
- To viscerally experience secure, loving connection with the ultimate caregiver
- To cry out from the depths of our wounds
- To abide in Christ and experience the sweetness of a new story
- The secret place —> our secure base

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

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Growing Up...

Did you feel loved/cared for? How did you know you were loved?

What made you feel unloved/unsafe?

Were your caregivers responsive/unresponsive?

How were emotions expressed...or not?

What did you need to do to belong?

How were your fears, cries, struggles, etc. responded to?

How has this shaped your view of the Father?

How does this impact your relationships/leadership style?

Therefore be imitators of God ,as beloved children. - Ephesians 5:1

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God, and so we are. - 1 John 3:1

The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. - Zephaniah 3:17

Health Starts in the Divine Space

- To start elsewhere is aspirational
- Secure attachment love frames conviction/repentance
- We trust the intent of God's discipline
- Ask God to reveal to you where He is at work
- Practice confessing together