

# The Heart of a Leader: In Crisis

*Team and Personal Equipping*

**WEEK FIVE**



**WELLSPRING  
GROUP**

*overflowing transformation*

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## Preparation for Week 5

To prepare for this week complete steps 1-2 below:

1) Read the information on the BLESS skills below.

Take a few moments and slowly read through these BLESS skills. As you do, take note of where you see elements of:

- Connecting to your own heart
- Connecting to God's heart
- Connecting to the hearts of others

### BLESS Skills

#### **BE FULLY PRESENT**

Be present on all four levels of your heart to God, his Larger Story and your part in it.

#### **LISTEN IN FOUR DIRECTIONS**

Listen for what is happening in the other person, what is happening in you, what you sense God may be experiencing or directing, and what evil may be doing.

#### **EXPLORE WITH EFFECTIVE QUESTIONS**

Ask questions that give the person an opportunity to connect to their feelings that will lead them to their deepest desires and, as appropriate, to action.

#### **SHARE FROM YOUR HEART**

Share how the conversation is affecting you from all four levels of your heart.

#### **SAVOR THE MOMENT**

Savoring involves reflecting, connecting, and celebrating at appropriate times.

The BLESS skills are more fully developed in Wellspring's discipleship/leadership development process: *The Battle for the Heart* ([www.wellspringgroup.org](http://www.wellspringgroup.org)). These are not just tools in a toolbox, but rather skills that flow out of a heart connected to God and to other people – allowing one to lead with heart and skill (Ps. 78:72).

2) Then watch this week's video linked to the right. As you go through the video, make note of where you see the BLESS skills used. We will be exploring these skills more in our Battle Preps this week. Use the following page provided to take notes.





*Battle Preps*

*You can become a living expression of the heart of God as you practice the BLESS skills.*

**DAY 1 QUESTION:**

*How are you an expression of the love of Christ as you are fully present with God and others?*

**WEEK 5 DAY 1 - BATTLE PREP****Awareness of God and Yourself**

Pause and become aware of how you are in this moment. Note two to three words that describe how you are feeling. Refer to the Feeling Words on p. 166 for help. Offer that to God, whether positive or negative.

Take a moment to practice **being** fully present to the Father of compassion and God of all comfort. Seek to connect your whole heart to God's heart.

As you are able, let go of distractions and still yourself, focusing your thoughts on God. Consider tangible ways he has expressed his compassionate, steadfast love for you. Dwell on these thoughts for a few moments.

As you think of his love for you, open yourself to feel – don't force yourself to feel "something," just open yourself to whatever you may experience. If you don't feel anything in particular, just proceed to the next step.

Now be aware of what the Lord may be feeling toward you. As you think about and open yourself to feel his compassionate, steadfast love, with what deep desires might you be connecting? (p. 167)

What is this like for you? Be very authentic in your response, regardless of whether it is positive or negative. Whatever comes to mind, offer these situations, emotions, decisions, or outcomes to God, and be open to what he might be up to in your heart in this moment.

**Encounter God and Yourself in Scripture**

**2 Cor. 1:3-7 (NIV)** provides an example of what it means to "be fully present" as indicated in the BLESS acronym. In the act and process of giving and receiving comfort, we become fully present to God's comforting heart, to the need in our own hearts for comfort, and to the need for comforting the hearts of others. As you read this passage, note the rhythm of giving and

receiving, and then mark where you see **Paul** and **us** connecting our hearts to the heart of God/Christ, and then connecting to the hearts of **others**.

*<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. <sup>5</sup> For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. <sup>6</sup> If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. <sup>7</sup> And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.*

How is your suffering and comfort connected to the suffering and comfort of others? (vv. 4, 6, and 7)

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To what extent have you experienced the comfort of Christ in the midst of suffering? (\*Grapple with this on your own and then see quote from Larry Bolden on the next page.)

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*\*We will never fully understand the sufferings of Christ, but in some way it flows out of his ability to be fully present and identify with us as human beings, sharing in our humanity (Heb. 2:14) – with being tempted in every way as we are (Heb. 4:15); with walking by faith through Gethsemane and the cross, trusting the Father to resurrect him that he might accomplish the mission of restoring human beings to the glory and honor they were created for. As we embrace the suffering and pressure of this fallen world, become fully present to the suffering of those around us, and grapple with trusting God’s heart of goodness toward us and others in the midst of suffering, Christ comes to us by his Holy Spirit through his word and his people to comfort us. For me (Larry Bolden), comfort is the presence of God who is the I Am, Immanuel -God with us. I experience this in various ways such as courage, peace, warmth, connection, knowing I’m seen, heard, and secure. – Larry Bolden, Wellspring Group Founder and President*

**FOR FURTHER STUDY:**

John 15:1-5

1 Cor. 4:7

**Commit Yourself**

In order to **receive** the compassion and comfort of God, we must come to him in utter vulnerability. Then, in order to **offer** God’s compassion and comfort to others, we must respond in humility.

Consider how you tend to respond to suffering; Would you consider suffering an isolating experience or a connecting one? Do you find yourself wanting to rush through suffering or glossing over it with a positive spin?

Pause and reflect on what happens in your heart when you think of personally enduring suffering. Offer to God any concerns or ways in which you may be experiencing suffering today.

Seek to open your heart to his compassion for you, to his comfort for you, and to his presence that promises to never leave nor forsake you. Record anything you want to remember in the space below.

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If you are able to experience that compassion and comfort, give thanks to your heavenly Father. If you are not able to, then give thanks to the Lord for who he is: a God of compassion and comfort. Ask him to reveal his compassion and comfort to you through this day.

On a scale of 0-10, with zero representing “not at all” and ten representing “tangibly and powerfully,” to what extent were you able to experience God’s compassion and comfort in the exercise above? (Take note of HOW you experienced it. Or, if you were unable to connect with God’s heart of compassion and comfort, make note of what you think might be holding you back.)

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Reflect on a recent experience you may have had with someone who was suffering. To what extent were you able to be fully present with them, both emotionally and physically, by truly seeing and hear them, rather than trying to fix or take away their pain?

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What empowered you to be present or hindered you from being present?

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What connection might you be seeing in your own life and leadership between **receiving** the comfort and compassion of God and your ability to **offer** it to others?

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How might those whom you lead experience you differently if you were to focus on just being present with them, meeting them where they are, and not trying to fix them?

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How would you answer today's reflection question – *“How are you an expression of the love of Christ as you are fully present with God and others?”*

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What was significant for you today?

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### **Prepare to Move Out**

Move into your day knowing that the “Father of compassion and God of all comfort” (2 Cor. 1:3) has given to you in part so that you may, in turn, give to others. You are blessed to be a blessing. Being God’s agent of blessing expresses God’s glory through your heart.

Today, seek to truly see another person’s need and emotional state, and if appropriate, reveal the comfort of Christ that you have experienced by comforting or simply being present with them. What are some practical ways that you might “be present” with them?

Remember that in Christ you have what it takes to love well as you stay connected to God’s heart of love and compassion.

*You can become a living expression of the heart of God as you practice the BLESS skills.*

**DAY 2 QUESTION:**

*How do you experience and express the very glory of God as you seek to be fully present with another person and draw out the purposes/desires of their heart?*

**WEEK 5 DAY 2 - BATTLE PREP**

**Awareness of God and Yourself**

Pause and become aware of how you are coming into this time. Note two to three words that describe how you are currently feeling (see p.166 for Feeling Words, if needed). Offer that to God, whether positive or negative.

Once again, seek to be fully present (BLESS) as you pause to connect to the heart of God in prayer and adoration.

Spend a moment getting in touch with the truth that God sees you. Jehovah-Roi (the God who sees) knit you together in your mother's womb, sees every part of your heart, and calls you by name. It is not possible for the omniscient, all-seeing, unconditionally loving God to overlook or forget you.

What does it feel like to be fully seen? Offer those thoughts and emotions to the Lord in prayer and thanksgiving.

What might God want to whisper to your heart as you experience him seeing you today?

**Encounter God and Yourself in Scripture**

Read the Scriptures and exhortations below then answer the questions that follow.

**Proverbs 20:5 (ESV)**

*The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.*

**2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT)**

*So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.*

One way you can tangibly express love to others is by seeking to understand the “deep waters” of their hearts. It is there that you can discover a person’s deep desires, which vitally shapes part of who they are as God’s image bearer.

Being understood is a deep desire of every human being. It is also connected to being seen, heard, and valued.

When you become a man or woman of understanding (a man or woman who longs to be fully present to another person and skillfully and carefully draw out the purposes/ desires of his/her heart) you increasingly begin to see a glimpse of the glory of God in another human being. Simultaneously, you yourself are revealing the glory of God by reflecting God’s compassionate love, grace, and truth in the moment to another human being. Maintaining this godly perspective on yourself and others is not easy! It is difficult- not because it is in itself complicated - but because we ourselves have many obstacles to overcome and because human beings are fallen and, therefore, often difficult to love. Loving sinful people requires us to die to self and to live out our identity in Christ as we were created and redeemed to be. That means that the expressions of our heart become a revelation of the glory and comfort of God in the midst of all human suffering.

Reflect on a recent time when you shared something really significant and vulnerable with someone with whom you are relationally close. How did they respond? Did they give advice, try to fix it, try to make it better, give you a pep talk, etc.? Or did they seek to be present, listen, understand, and draw out the purposes of your heart?

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What was that experience like for you?

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How did you feel? (refer to p. 166 for help.)

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What deep desires were blocked or fulfilled? (What were you needing/longing for?) – refer to p. 167 for help.

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So how do you draw out the purposes of another’s heart? This is a lifetime journey and covered much more fully in the *Battle for the Heart* process. However, there is one simple skill that, when energized by love, will equip you to discover the purposes/desires of another person’s heart.

Read over the explanation of a skill called “Unpacking Significant Words” below and then answer the questions that follow.

**Unpacking Significant Words**

When listening to another person, pay attention to words filled with emotion, because feelings can be traced back to deep desires blocked or deep desires fulfilled. Remember that deep desires arise out of the image of God in you. They also draw you toward God and can only be fulfilled through union with God.

Many times, we don’t even realize what deep desires we are acting out of because we are not accustomed to identifying them. When we take the time to understand those desires, we then begin to understand what is motivating us – what the purposes of our actions are and the energy behind them.

WHAT MAKES A WORD “SIGNIFICANT”? Sometimes the word might be significant because of the non-verbal expression that accompanies it such as tears or facial expressions. Other times the word might be significant because of how descriptive it is – “I felt destroyed.” vs. “I felt sad.” Then other times the word might just resonate with you personally and strike a chord within your own heart. We certainly don’t want to attempt to unpack every feeling word we hear, as that could make someone feel interrogated. However, when seeking to connect more deeply with another person, unpacking a significant word is a great place to start!

To help you conversationally trace a person’s desires by “unpacking significant words,” slowly read the following dialogue in this scenario. Try to put yourself in the situation – be fully present and listen to what might be going on inside your employee or co-worker’s heart. Note the significant words spoken by the employee or co-worker and the subsequent questions that these emotionally charged (“significant”) words (*italicized*) directly arise from:

Employee or Co-worker	You
“I had a remarkable meeting this week.”	“What was <i>remarkable</i> about it?”
“Even though it was a Zoom meeting, I felt like I was able to really understand the client’s needs and connect, not just professionally, but on a personal level as well.”	“What was it like for you to <i>understand</i> and <i>connect</i> in a meaningful way?”
“I felt a sense of value; that I not only contributed to the company, but that I also added something positive to the client’s day full of multiple online meetings.”	“When you feel <i>valued</i> , what is that like?”
“It helps me know that I make a difference.”	“And when you know you <i>make a difference</i> , what does that do for you?”
“I have impact in the world.”	(You would then cover the person (identify, affirm, and/or share; see p. 164) in this moment of their vulnerability)

To which deep desires (see page 167) is the employee or co-worker connecting?

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By simply unpacking a single emotionally charged word “remarkable” with a few questions, you have now more deeply explored another person’s heart, helping them get in touch with their own deep desire. This awareness can give them insight into their unique identity. As you are then fully present with them by simply identifying, affirming, and sharing from your heart, you become an expression of the love of Christ to them.

Using the 3-point response (Identify, Affirm, Share), what are some responses you could give from your own heart to cover the employee or co-worker in the example above?

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**FOR FURTHER STUDY:**

Prov. 16:23-24

Prov. 15:28

1 Pet. 3:8

**Commit Yourself**

As you consider the skill of “Unpacking Significant Words,” what stands out to you?

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How difficult do you think it would be to listen for these emotionally charged words and explore them more deeply (as appropriate)?

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How would you answer today's reflection question – *“How do you experience and express the very glory of God as you seek to be fully present with another person and draw out the purposes/desires of their heart?”*

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What was significant for you today?

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### **Prepare to Move Out**

As you move into your day, ask God to make you a man or woman of understanding (Prov. 20:5). Walk in confidence, knowing you have the skills to love and lead well and to begin to draw out desires dwelling deep within another's heart.

Remember that those you encounter today are not problems waiting to be solved, but rather human beings with hearts who need to experience the love and compassion of Christ just as you do.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Look for one conversation today in which you can practice Unpacking Significant Words. Take note of what happens to share in your Team Meeting.

*You can become a living expression of the heart of God as you practice the BLESS skills.*

### DAY 3 QUESTION:

*How are you an expression of the compassionate love of Christ as you rejoice and mourn with others?*

## **WEEK 5 DAY 3 – BATTLE PREP**

### **Awareness of God and Yourself**

Pause. Take a moment to become aware of how you are coming into this time. Note two to three words that describe how you are feeling in this moment (see page 166, if you need Feeling Words). Offer that to God, whether positive or negative.

Still yourself before the Lord and seek to **be** fully present (see BLESS skills, p.137) to your heart and his heart for you.

Take a moment to reflect on one or two ways Jesus has loved you this week. How have you experienced his compassionate, gracious presence in your life?

**L**isten to what is happening in your heart and what God might want to express to you as you connect to his love and compassion for you.

Offer whatever may be stirring in your heart and mind to the Lord.

### **Encounter God and Yourself in Scripture**

Based on how you have been experiencing God's compassionate heart in your own suffering and discovering how to see others in their suffering, slowly meditate on **Romans 12:14-15 (NIV)** below. Read it slowly several times, allowing the Holy Spirit to speak to you.

*<sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.*

These verses speak to the heart of being a shepherd leader. They relate to much of what we've covered in these five weeks, but today we will focus on verse 15 - "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn." How exactly do we do that?

Rejoicing and mourning with someone primarily means covering them, which you'll recall from Week 3 can be accomplished by identifying, affirming, and sharing from your heart (3-point response, p. 164).

Rejoicing and mourning requires three sequential practices:

- 1.) Embracing your own vulnerability.
- 2.) Allowing yourself to be emotionally affected by another's joy or pain.
- 3.) Humbling yourself so that you can be fully present with that person. This means surrendering your own agenda, laying aside distractions, and understanding the significance of their experience.

Seeking to walk through these three steps will help you authentically and effectively rejoice or mourn with another.

As Brene' Brown brought out in Week 4, identifying involves connecting to another's emotions - not just their happy or painful situation. To do that we must give the other person an opportunity to more deeply understand the impact of their situation - to go beyond superficial descriptions or characterizations, such as "awesome and amazing" or "disappointing or painful," in order to get down to what actually contributes to the joy or pain that makes these situations worthy of rejoicing or mourning.

Doing so begins with being fully present with another and then seeking to understand the significance of the experience for them personally. You can do that by asking a few simple questions or by asking the person for a couple of feeling words. Once you hear an emotionally charged word, you can then employ the skills of Unpacking Significant Words, and then cover the person's vulnerability if they allow you to go down to the level of their deep desires.

Reflect on a time when you have been in a state of rejoicing or mourning. What did you experience from God in those moments?

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Think about a time when you were either rejoicing or mourning but others did not respond to your situation and left you feeling missed and alone. What did you long for in those moments?

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Now think about another time when you were either rejoicing or mourning, but you felt the other person was truly present and connected to you. How did that experience feel?

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What made the difference in your heart between the above two situations?

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**Unpacking Significant Words (Rejoicing and Mourning)**

Let's go back to the skill we discovered in Day 2 of this week. But this time, let's focus on diving deeper with another person when you find them either rejoicing or mourning.

The expression of joy or pain is always accompanied by significant emotional words. By tuning into these important expressions and then asking a few clarifying questions, you can effectively reflect and reveal God's heart of love and compassion to another person as they rejoice or mourn.

As a godly leader, we cannot overstate the importance of implementing Romans 12:15 in the moments when you are confronted with another's joy or pain – especially among those relationally closest to you. These times represent critical relational moments when your response either leaves the other person feeling alone and perhaps devalued or leaves the other

person feeling seen, heard, and understood. Rejoicing and mourning moments are like relational crossroads that lead toward unity or division.

An example of unpacking conversations involving mourning in the workplace: Read the conversation below taking note of the significant words and the questions formed from them. Remember that viewing other people as “problems to be solved” is actually not an optimal relational approach, in spite of our good intentions to be helpful. Our goal should not be to fix other’s problems, which is not easy in the marketplace, especially when much of our job revolves around problem-solving as quickly as possible. Relationally, the best approach is not to attempt to play the role of Mr. or Mrs. “Fix-it,” in part because some pain is permanent and unfixable. Also, someone who is mourning first needs comfort for their pain, not advice. It is best to acknowledge or simply sit with another in their pain, sometimes even in silence. At other times, you can comfort as you have been comforted by God. The example below illustrates a lighter conversation providing an opportunity to unpack the significant emotional word of “defeated.”

Co-Worker	You
“I bid on a job in another area of the company and I didn’t get it.”	“So how are you feeling about that?” (Don’t assume you know how they feel)
“I feel defeated. I really thought I had that job.”	“I am so sorry. I have been there before. I’d really like to hear more about <i>defeated</i> – it seems like a weighty word.”
“It feels like I can never get ahead. Just when I think I’m about to catch a break something else happens that knocks me back again. I’m tired of trying.”	“I can really relate to being <i>tired of trying</i> . That can be a lonely place. Thank you for telling me how you’re feeling. I want you to know I am here for you.”
“Thank you. That means a lot for you to say that. It does help to know that I am not alone.”	“You mentioned how you want to <i>catch a break</i> in life. I’m curious as to what is behind that.”
“I just feel like I’ve been working so hard for so long, and I really need rest.”	“You do work hard, and I really admire that about you. I long for you to have <i>rest</i> too. Is there any way I can help you find <i>rest</i> today?”

An example of unpacking conversations involving rejoicing in the workplace: Rejoicing with others is just as important to learn as mourning with others. In helping another person unpack the emotional significance of a situation, you can help them discover how God might want to use this circumstance in a deeper way to reveal his heart to them, such as reminding them of their value:

You	Co-worker
"Hey, thanks for all the work you did on that project last week. You really nailed it."	"Oh, it was no big deal."
"Really - it was a <i>big deal</i> to me! Your ideas took the project in a totally different direction than I would have headed, and as a result, I think it turned out better than I could have hoped."	"I was just doing my job."
"You went beyond <i>just doing your job</i> . You took a risk in speaking up and it made all the difference. I want you to hear that I really value your opinions."	"Wow. Thank you. I was nervous to speak up, so it means a lot that my opinions carry weight."
"How does it make you feel knowing that your opinions have <i>weight</i> ?"	"It makes me feel like I might actually be a significant part of the team."
"You are absolutely <i>significant</i> . You have a unique perspective that helps me see things I might not otherwise."	"Thanks for saying that. I have always believed that my "unique perspective" just made me weird. Hearing you say that actually helps me feel more valued."
"That makes me sad to hear that you have ever felt <i>weird</i> or less than <i>valuable</i> . I'm grateful for the way God made you and am glad you're on my team."	"Thank you for giving me the courage to be myself."

The above conversation represents a person skilled in Unpacking Significant Words and in Covering another. But it can give you a vision for the kinds of deeper conversations you can naturally have at home or in the workplace when you are listening in four directions (as described in the BLESS acronym) and practicing these new relational skills.

**FOR FURTHER STUDY:**

Jn. 11:33-35

1 Cor. 12:25-27

### Commit Yourself

Reflect on conversations you may have had this past week. Was there an opportunity to rejoice or mourn with someone? How did you engage the other person, and what was the outcome?

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If the conversation above didn't go as you hoped, think back to an emotionally significant word or phrase that the person may have said. How might you have unpacked that word, and what might have instead been the outcome?

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Take a few moments to offer the outcome of that exchange to God's care and providence and try to connect to God's heart for the other person. How might God want you to follow up with them?

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How would you answer today's reflection question – *"How are you an expression of the compassionate love of Christ as you rejoice and mourn with others?"*

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What was significant for you today?

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### **Prepare to Move Out**

Move into your day knowing that whatever circumstances you face, the Holy Spirit is present within you. He is your Comforter and enables you to comfort others as you stay connected to him.

Continue to practice **B**eing fully present and **L**istening in 2 directions and remember to cover vulnerability when it is offered using the 3-point response you have already learned.

**ASSIGNMENT: Between now and your Team Meeting, be attentive to people around you who are rejoicing and/or mourning. Seek to simply be fully present with them and reflect on how you can cover their vulnerability (3-point response).**

**Send out your State of Your Heart update via email to your group at least 24 hours before your team meeting. A template is provided on p. 168.**



**WEEK 5 TEAM MEETING:**

*You can become a living expression of the heart of God as you practice the BLESS skills*

As you head into this week's meeting keep in mind the skills you are becoming aware of, including:

1. **Covering** vulnerability using the 3-point response (Identify, Affirm, Share from your heart)

Remember: when using this skill, do so briefly and concisely. If you find that you can't identify with the specific situation, can you identify with what they are feeling? Also, remember not to steal the other person's story by telling your story. And lastly, don't seek to fix their problem – *feel* their problem along with them.

2. **BLESS**

- a. Being fully present.

Connected to your own heart, to God's heart, and to the hearts of others.

- b. Listening in multiple directions.

You have practiced listening in 2 directions (What is happening in your heart and the heart of the other person). Begin listening for what God might be up to and how Evil is hunting, as well.

- c. Exploring with effective questions.

Utilize the skill of Unpacking Significant Words.

- d. Sharing from your heart.

Verbalize how you are being impacted. Express what you are feeling for the other person.

- e. Savoring the moment

Pause to rejoice and mourn with others.

The above skills are simply a taste of what Wellspring Group offers to help lead others with integrity of heart and a skillful hand (Ps. 78:72). However, even this taste – incorporated into your life and relationships – can have significant impact.

**Before Your Meeting:**

- Read the "Unpacking Significant Words Exercise" on p. 160.
- Prior to the Team Meeting, the group facilitator should assign each person with another's heart update to use during the engaging exercise. Each person should get the opportunity

to engage and be engaged. If possible, make assignments when you send out heart updates so that each person can prepare accordingly.

- Send a State of Your Heart update to your team.
- Read the State of Your Heart updates others send in and prepare a few questions to ask your assigned person using the Unpacking Significant Words exercise.
- Review the meeting outline and write your answers to the discussion questions.
- Be sure to review the gray boxes from each Battle Prep and answer the Team Meeting gray box questions.

#### Week 5 Team Meeting Objectives:

- Practice the skills learned throughout the module.
- Each person practices Unpacking Significant Words using another's State of the Heart update.
- Draw out each person's answer to the Daily Reflection questions.

### **Abbreviated Heart Check (10-15 min)**

1. For this heart check, simply seek to identify the current state of each person's heart – ensuring that each person is emotionally in a good place to proceed with the content of the meeting.
2. Each person shares 2-3 words expressing the current state of their heart.
3. Whoever is leading – if a person sharing is in a good place, then move on to the next person. Since you will be Covering each other in the next exercise, don't take much time to Cover here - unless someone is in a particularly vulnerable place. In that case, Cover briefly, and hopefully they will be in a better place to continue.

### **Engaging Exercise (30 min)**

If team members were, by chance, unable to prepare ahead of time, give a few minutes for each person to read through their assigned State of the Heart Update, with other team members noting significant words communicated, and then forming a couple of questions using the Unpacking Significant Words exercise shown on p. 160. Remember: you are forming a question by repeating back to them the *exact* word they used. Note the simplicity of the illustration we used and try to stay that simple. At this point, you are seeking simply to learn the skill. Greater detail can be added as you grow in using the skill.

Each person should get the chance to engage and to be engaged.

### **Unpacking Significant Words Exercise Using a State of Your Heart Update**

Many times, we don't even realize what deep desires we are acting out of because we are not accustomed to identifying them. When we take the time to understand those desires, we then begin to understand what is motivating us – what the purposes of our actions are and the energy behind them.

Look back over the example given on p. 148.

In the above referenced example, by simply unpacking a single word “remarkable” through asking a few questions, you have now journeyed more deeply into another's heart, helping them get in touch with their motivation and purpose. They can then realize through this exchange the impact they are having in the world. Then, as you are fully present to the emotions in your own heart regarding this exchange and share back with the persona how you are impacted by their situation, you then become a living expression of the love of God.

Note that it is important to simply restate the word that the person has used. Don't change it.

#### **Exercise using a State of the Heart update:**

1. Read your teammate's heart update, taking note of any significant or key words that stand out to you.
2. Using the significant words you identified (without changing the words), consider what question you might ask in order to draw out the deeper purposes of their heart.

The simplest way to form a question is to begin with the words “What” or “How.” These words create opportunities for “open ended” answers rather than “Yes/No” answers.

3. Share with your teammate:
  - a. First, BRIEFLY cover their vulnerability using the 3-point response (identify, affirm, share, p. 164).
  - b. Then begin asking questions about an emotionally significant word or phrase you identified.

Just a reminder: The person with whom you are engaging is not “a problem to be solved.” You may think you know, or actually know the answer to solve their problem, but the insight which the other person discovers for themselves tends to be exponentially more powerful than the insight someone tells them.

When you get to words expressing deep desire, where the person begins repeating similar words, take a moment to Cover the sharer using the 3-point response.

**Main Discussion (45 min)**

Review your daily gray boxes. What was most significant from your Battle Preps this week? This may be your gray box answer from the BP that most impacted you or a theme you see running across what you gained from all the BPs this week.

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What was it like practicing some of the BLESS skills this week?

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What worked well?

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What, if anything, did you find more difficult?

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What happened when you tried the skill of Unpacking Significant Words this week?

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What was that like for you?

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What do you think it was like for the other person?

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## QUESTIONS REVIEW

*You can become a living expression of the heart of God as you practice the BLESS skills.*

*DAY 1 QUESTION: How are you an expression of the love of Christ as you are fully present with God and others?*

*DAY 2 QUESTION: How do you experience and express the very glory of God as you seek to be fully present with another person and draw out the purposes/desires of their heart?*

*DAY 3 QUESTION: How are you an expression of the compassionate love of Christ as you rejoice and mourn with others?*

As you reflect on your answers to the above questions, how do you want to respond in the way that you lead?

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### **Wrap-up (10 min)**

Each person shares in two to three words how you experienced this meeting.

- Did you experience anything negative or painful that you need to discuss further or offline?
- What was most positive?

Close in prayer.

### 3-Point Response of Covering

#### 1. Identify

Identify with their circumstance or pain with a brief sentence or by expressing what you feel for *them* (not for their circumstance). Don't start telling your story and hijack the moment. You might respond with how you can relate, using a short sentence such as:

"I can relate to your feelings of anger."

"I have felt that way before."

"That sounds so painful."

"How exciting that you won that award!"

These statements cover another's fear that by feeling and expressing what they are feeling, something is wrong with them, or that they are alone, and are the only person who has ever experienced such feelings.

#### 2. Affirm

Affirm the person for taking the risk to be vulnerable with you, as well as validate what they are feeling.

"Thank you for sharing. That took a lot of courage."

"You matter to me, so I'm grateful that you're telling me about what happened."

"I can see that you are hurting, and I want you to know that I care."

"That's a huge loss. I'm sorry you're having to go through that!"

You might actually use physical touch *if appropriate*.

By affirming another, you cover their fear of being rejected and left feeling alone.

#### 3. Share

Share from your feelings or desires how you are affected by the person who shared, and from what they shared. Use the Feeling Words, p. 166.

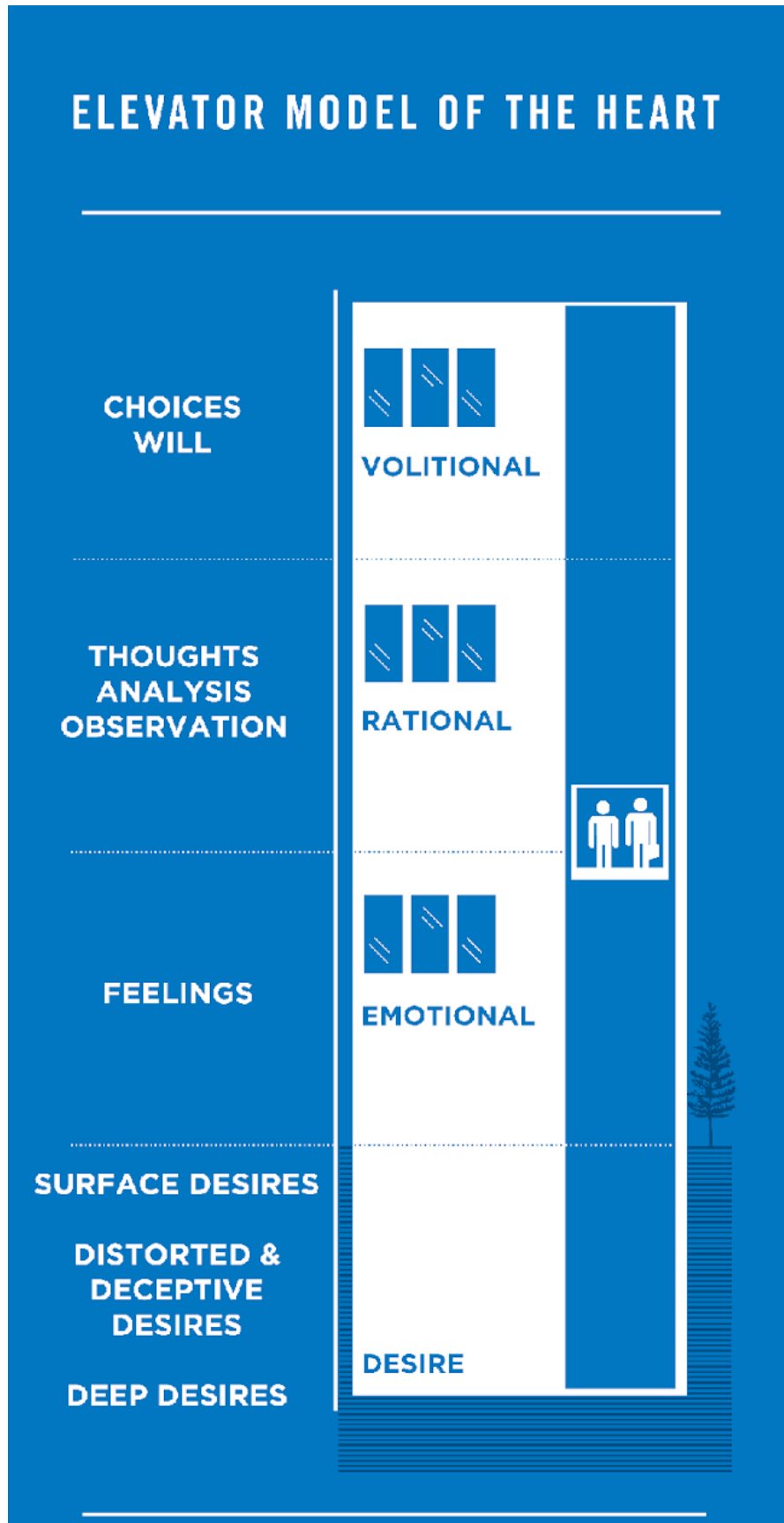
"I admire you..."

"You are giving me courage to step into hard places."

"I'm angry at how you were violated."

"I'm saddened by your loss."

"I celebrate your promotion! Way to go!"





## Feeling Words: Positive Feelings

Peaceful	Joyful	Empowered	Authentic	Grateful	Loved
Comfortable	Refreshed	Strong	Real	Satisfied	Considered
Secure	Stimulated	Capable	True	Sentimental	Seen
Calm	Creative	Energetic	Honest	Nostalgic	Loved/Loving
Relaxed	Encouraged	Hopeful	Direct	Humbled	Intimate
Trusting	Pleased	Inspired	Loyal	Thoughtful	Connected
Safe	Happy	Respected	Faithful	Blessed	Desirable
Protected	Full	Significant	Aware	Thankful	Beautiful
Content	Free	Successful	Seen	Whole	Adored
Sure	Delighted	Valuable	Heard	Healed	Kind
Certain	Thrilled	Confident	Known	Full	Nurturing
Patient	Elated	Gifted	Glorious	Awed	Trusted
	Exhilarated	Strong			Delighted in

## Feeling Words: Negative Feelings

Fearful	Sad	Confused	Angry	Ashamed	Lonely
Shy	Down	Overwhelmed	Hurt	Bashful	Left out
Cautious	Bored	Bewildered	Resentful	Embarrassed	Invisible
Hesitant	Burdened	Torn	Ticked	Awkward	Out of place
Insecure	Somber	Stunned	Cynical	Clumsy	Disconnected
Anxious	Disappointed	Curious	Skeptical	Uncomfortable	Distant
Tense	Tired	Uncertain	Annoyed	Flustered	Excluded
Nervous	Dissatisfied	Ambivalent	Frustrated	Foolish	Isolated
Troubled	Discouraged	Doubtful	Fed up	Weak	Unwanted
Distressed	Grieved	Unsettled	Indignant	Inadequate	Rejected
Scared	Depressed	Hesitant	Jealous	Self-conscious	Despised
Horrified	Defeated	Perplexed	Disgusted	Diminished	Abandoned
Helpless	Empty	Puzzled	Hostile	Chagrined	Desolate
Agitated	Miserable	Distracted	Furious	Remorseful	Forsaken
Shocked	Despairing	Flustered	Critical	Guilty	
Alarmed	Devastated	Fragmented	Contemptuous	Humiliated	
Numb	Undone	Lost	Enraged	Mortified	

## DESIRES

In Week One, we reviewed the truth that you are created in God's image (Gen. 1:26). He has placed inside you deep desires that reflect his image.

*He has made everything beautiful and appropriate in its time. He has also planted eternity [a sense of divine purpose] in the human heart [a mysterious longing which nothing under the sun can satisfy, except God]—yet man cannot find out (comprehend, grasp) what God has done (His overall plan) from the beginning to the end. - Ecclesiastes 3:11 (AMP)*

We were created for eternity, for a Larger Story that is so great we cannot even fathom the beginning from the end. Yet there are glimpses of that story in scripture and echoes of that story hidden deep within our hearts, in the image of God within us.

The deep desires listed below draw you to God and can only be truly satisfied in the context of connection with God.

### DEEP DESIRES

- Purpose, to be part of something larger, transcendence.
- Relationship: to love and be loved, to pursue and be pursued, community, family.
- Impact, significance.
- Honor, respect.
- Known and valued: understood, heard, seen.
- To protect and provide, to be protected and provided for, security, safety.
- To come through: duty, to hear "well done".
- Beauty and creativity.
- Justice and freedom.
- Peace, wholeness, completion, home, order.

Surface desires are connected to deep desires. Exploring surface desires can help you discover the deep desires animating these more superficial desires.

### SURFACE/TEMPORAL DESIRES

- Material: Money, a new car, house, jewelry, clothes, toys.
- Experiential: A vacation, climb a mountain, walk in the woods, romance, sports, recreation, achievements, mother, father, husband, wife.
- Positional: Motherhood, fatherhood, marriage, or a particular job or title in your vocation, avocation, or ministry.
- Relational: Friendship, family, spouse, work.

### **State of Your Heart Template**

Copy and paste the form below into an email. Then process through a recent situation that has some emotional content. Processing through a single situation – i.e. “I lost one of my biggest customers this week...” rather than a more general state of being “It’s been a frustrating week...” – will help you gain clearer understanding of your heart as you narrow down your specific thoughts, feelings, desires, and choices to that individual event. You may then be able to identify patterns or threads in subsequent events.

Make authenticity your goal in this key exercise. Seek to appropriately express who you are without worrying how you look or what your team members may think of you.

**Personal - share your heart:** Remember to focus on how you are handling life’s challenges internally and avoid hiding behind your activities.

**Name/Date:**

**How are you doing?** (A) Struggling (B) Fair (C) Good (D) Excellent

**What situation or circumstance is most on your heart?** (*What do I need to process?*)

**Rational:** *What am I thinking in this situation (observations, analysis)?*

**Emotional:** *What am I feeling in this situation? (refer to the Feelings chart on p. 166 for help.)*

**Desires:** *What is the driving force behind my thoughts and emotions? Remember that feelings often point beyond the feelings themselves to a deep desire either blocked or fulfilled. (refer to the Deep Desires listed on p. 167.)*

**Volitional:** “What do you want to choose moving forward?”

**What might God be up to in my heart through this situation?**