



**BUSINESS FAITH GROUPS**

Support & Challenge

John 8:1-18

## **I. SESSION OVERVIEW**

- John 8:1-18
- Discovery | Grace & Truth
- Business Application | Support & Challenge

## **II. REVIEW (30m)**

- Personal Catchup
- Review last month's outcomes
- Open in Prayer

## **III. DISCOVERY**

- Read John 8:1-18 (shared reading)

Context/ This whole conversation in chapters 7 and 8 that Jesus is having with the Pharisees and Jewish leaders during the feast of tabernacles centers around the question of who Jesus really is.

It was the Feast of Tabernacles. In the time of Jesus, every good Jewish man and woman went to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast, which commemorates the time their ancestors had lived in tents as they wandered in the wilderness. Agriculturally, Sukkot (as it is also called) is a harvest festival, sometimes referred to as the Festival of Ingathering.

What jumps out at you?

- Give each an opportunity to share what they discovered as you keep it a conversation integrating your insights and their discoveries.

## **IV. AREA CHAIR INSIGHTS (30M)**

### **1. The Trap**

Jesus seems to be in a pickle—Do I uphold the law or protect the woman?? The point of the Pharisees' exercise, however, was not to establish her guilt or innocence but to trap Jesus in a no-win situation. The religious authorities set a trap, believing Jesus would either be pressured to stone the woman or challenge their authority and, by implication, the law of God.

Stoning the woman would not have fit with Christ's character. Lack of compassion for the least. Defying the authorities would have appeared rebellious and sinful, even though they were distorting Jewish law. if He broke the Torah Law, He couldn't have been our perfect blemish free sacrifice.

What mattered most to the Scribes and Pharisees, however, was not right and wrong but humiliating Jesus and reasserting their authority among His followers.

**So I wonder if this story is really more about exposing the Pharisees' trying to trap Jesus, and less about His showing her mercy.**

They were publicly shaming the woman to get at Jesus. Their heart was shaming Jesus but used this woman, really anyone, to stop him because he was threatening their power and position.

Sound familiar in today's environment?? We are quick to shame people to get to the heart of desiring no law, no God, desiring a position of power.

Q- Can you think of a time when you were caught in the middle of the letter of the law and the spirit of the law at your company? In a relationship?

Q- A time when you fudged something to protect your position or power?

## **2. Truth & Grace**

Don't miss this-- The powerful message that is in his body language & tone!

**v6-8 He kneels to write; kneels with the woman (v6, 8). Grace**

**Then stands up to respond in harsh tone v7 truth**

His response was not a reaction. It was Measured.

**Q-Where are you naturally bent—Truth or Grace—as a person?**

Go to John 1:14. It does it say about Jesus? He is full of grace & truth. To me, my mind goes to 50/50=100%. But full at the same time means 100/100=100%. Seems impossible to be both at same time!

- Grace means I'll love you no matter what.
- Truth means I'll be honest with you no matter what.
- Understood rather than condemned.
- Saved rather than stoned.
- Sin exposed yet covered in His love.

**Q- How do you balance both (in light of running a company & family)?**

**Q- How can we support each other to grow in your weaker one?**

## **3. Throw the Stone**

Jesus response to the Pharisee was not to perform but to look inward, at your heart, then cast the first Stone.

**Examine your own heart first. This is the starting point and ending point. It's how we navigate Religion, Cancel Culture, Shaming, bondage, etc.**

**See our own sin; be remorseful; Confess our own sin; ask for forgiveness of our own sin. Then through His grace we engage with culture.**

The crowd came that day to see a woman pay for her sins. They left realizing that they deserved to pay for their own.

“Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”

Q- How quick are you reacting in the flesh first before reacting in your heart to a wrong?

Q- How does God’s Mercy of forgiveness resonate with you?

#### **4. Light in Darkness**

The Pharisees’ challenge in 8:13 shows how much they don’t want to believe – how blinded they are to the light of the world. And if the Pharisees really need another witness – Jesus gives them the Father – the one he came from, the one he’s coming to. But for those who are blind in their sin, the light shines in the darkness, but the darkness doesn’t understand it.

Jesus exposes religion and its rules vs a relationship with the Father. Risk being different. Be light in a dark world.

Big Picture view/ Could v1-11 be about grace & v12-18 be about truth (declaring himself light)?

Q- Do others see your light?

Q- Do you have the courage to be a light to someone in your company platform (employee+family, customer, vendor, community) that is in darkness right now?

#### **V. WRAP**

The religious leaders were threatened by Jesus and they responded by trying to cancel him. Often when we are threatened, in particular in leadership, we respond wielding our authority & power as well. Sadly, not much has changed.

- How can we help each other with Grace & Truth not Grace or Truth in the workplace?
- How has being Light in Darkness challenged you?

# BUSINESS APPLICATION

## I. SESSION OVERVIEW

- Business Application | Support & Challenge
- Tool
- Outcome/ Fighting for your people's highest good.

## II. CONTEXT

Jesus modeled truth & grace. Opposites yet both are needed. Yet he was able to leverage both at same time in a way that met people where they were at.

- Empathy to the highest degree.
- Vulnerability producing emotional safety to admit what I need;
  - Grace= support
  - Truth= challenge

We like to say that a good leader, or a “leader worth following”, is someone who understands how to accurately use support and challenge with those he or she leads. In essence, **they use support and challenge to fight for the highest possible good in those around them.**

As simple of a concept as this may be, the vast majority of leaders struggle with implementing it on a daily basis because it's hard.

- most leaders spend the majority of their time putting out fires.
- there's that struggle between being positive & tough love
- As a believer, being our best glorifies God.

I want to equip you with tools to help you with support (grace) and challenge (truth) and what it might look like to use each of them.

## III. TOOL/ Support & Challenge Matrix

### BOX 1. HIGH Support | LOW Challenge

- PROTECTOR.
- When you think of supporting someone, I want you to think of a shield.
- As a leader you called to come to aid of your people and serve them.

The use of support can look different depending on the situation, but at the core, support is used to encourage and protect the relationship for the sake of growth.

- Oftentimes leaders who favor support over challenge will create a culture that feeds on verbal reinforcement and encouragement but weak on

- reprimand or conflict. That's because you don't like conflict so you cheerlead your people.
- Being an encouraging leader is a great thing, but if your leadership is weighted disproportionately in favor of support, you are not building a culture of growth, but rather one of entitlement, mistrust and insecurity.

That's why it's important to balance out the amount of support offered with a healthy dose of it's side-kick, challenge.

#### BOX 2. LOW Support | LOW Challenge

- ABDICATOR.
- Developing a Bored Culture.
- Nobody sticks around here. Anyone who does slowly deteriorates and dies out.
- Apathy kills energy, the land of low expectations, low production.

#### BOX 3. LOW Support-Invitation | HIGH Challenge

- DOMINATOR
- Developing a Stressful, Discouraged Culture of fear & manipulation.
- Most of us have had those supervisors or managers whose attitude was "Get it done, and if you don't, then you'll be replaced." There is always plenty of work to do.
- But when the environment lacks encouragement, care, and a relational element, then the culture suffers. Eventually, it burns out.

Where leaders typically become derailed is when the majority of their leadership is full of challenge with little to no support. The mindset here is that "My team needs to be pushed hard and I am not their mother. Growth only happens when you put people in tough situations, and that's what I'm doing."

- Leaders who challenge and forget to support aren't actually building a healthy culture of growth but rather one of fear.
- Often Self-Preservation of the leader kicks in.

#### Box 4. HIGH Challenge | HIGH SUPPORT

- LIBERATOR (the sweet spot of Empowerment & Opportunity and Productivity)
- Language used is ACCOUNTABLE, PUSH, STRETCH, TASKED and they feel supported, rewarded but it can't happen until a relationship of

trust has forged.

- As a leader, you are called to challenge those around you to strive for higher goals, become more competent, and to get stronger. Effective leaders use challenge to hold their teams accountable to a certain standard of excellence.
- Most effective teams live in Box 4. The bulk of research regarding workplace satisfaction indicates that this is where most workers want to live.
- As leaders, Support allows us to nurture our teams, caring for them as more than just a means to an end. Challenge helps us move them closer to what they can be and what they can accomplish.
- If you find yourself here, consider yourself blessed. Then ask, “What do we need to do to stay here?” Qs like;
  - What specifics do they need from me?
  - How do I help them get to the next level?
  - What is their tendency & pattern, behavior most undermining their influence?
  - What is the next skillset each has to develop?

#### IV. GROWTH

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1/ Where are you as leader on this Matrix?

- Which do you tend to lead with, support or challenge?
- What would it look for you to begin using both in a healthy manner?
- How can you bring this language to your team to help them to grow in their leadership?

2/ Self care;

- Who provides support & challenge for you?
- How do you inflict self-support, self-challenge to grow you?
- How do you know when you need it?

3/ Plot your people or leaders on the Matrix.

- Can you choose at least one key employee to use this to stretch them into a High Performer?
- What similar tools do you use that’s working? not working?

#### V. WRAP

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Balance full of Truth & Grace. Productive balance in growing your team is Support & Challenge.

- Keep in mind, that moving quadrants isn’t easy and usually takes some pioneering and hard change. These rough patches should be expected, not avoided. As you lead, be clear that movement creates friction and requires endurance and vision.
- We begin by leading with relational invitation. Open up to your team, get to know them, and seek their benefit beyond your own. Be vulnerable, because the more honest you are, the more honest they will be.

- Over time, you'll earn the right to challenge them. From there you'll be on your way to a healthy, productive culture.

#### Action Steps |

- What do you need from the group to be intentional and put these tips into practice?
- This month focus on improving your own "Support & Challenge" by understanding your tendencies and patterns that drive your behaviors.

#### GOALS |

- Ask each for their goals from this meeting to the next.
- Commit to prayer & supporting each other.

Name	Business	Personal	Faith
First Name		Strength training	Integration
First Name	LT/Culture	Running (alarms)	Listening to Him
Jon	Culture	Intentionality	Consistency
Kevin	Culture	Intentionality	Consistency
Brad	Culture	Leading the Family	Intentionality
First Name	Culture	Strength thru surgery; leverage time	Trusting Him



# SUPPORT CHALLENGE MATRIX

