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Outreach Concept Sheet One Degree Rule

Understanding the One Degree Rule:

Every follower of Jesus has an outreach temperature. It can be hot, cold or somewhere in the middle. This temperature impacts the way we live our life and interact with those who are far from God. It is our responsibility to steward this temperature and seek to increase it so that our hearts burn hotter for those who are spiritually lost. The one degree rule is the reality that all of us need to seek to increase our outreach temperature by one degree on a regular basis. If I am at a 3, I can take steps to raise my personal temperature to a 4. If I am at a 7, I can work at raising it to an 8. As my temperature goes up, my effectiveness in outreach increases.

Biblical Foundation...

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9:35-38)

In this passage we are pressed to face a sobering reality. Very often, the problem in the evangelistic equation is not the world and those who are far from God. The problem is often with those who are already in God's family. Jesus wants us to face the fact that the harvest is plentiful (there are many people who are hungry for God). It is the workers that are not engaging. Our hearts have become cold. We don't share, care, and pray as much as we should. And, in response to this, Jesus calls us to pray... for ourselves and the church.

Will you enter in? Will you pray, “Lord, increase my burden for lost people, break my heart for those who do not know you, increase my evangelistic passion and temperature!”?

Extended Description:

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----
----8-----9-----10

For our purposes, we will be using a scale of 1 to 10 to help identify where we are in our evangelistic passion. A 10 represents a heart and life that are sizzling hot for evangelism. We pray often, we notice people who are lost, we make time in our schedule to connect with those who are far from God (and we enjoy being with them). Our light is shining, we speak of our faith to those who are lost, we share the story of what God is doing in our life, and we share the Gospel (the message of Jesus) in a regular and natural way. A 1 represents that our heart is cold when it comes to the call to outreach. We don't pray for lost people, we become too busy with church stuff to make space for people who are outside of God's family, we walk past opportunities to let the light of Jesus shine and we hardly notice it, we rarely tell others about our faith and avoid communicating the Gospel of Jesus.

Only we can know where we really are. Only we can name it and identify when we need to take action that will raise our outreach temperature by another degree. But, if we can become attentive to this aspect of our spiritual life and be intentional about raising our outreach temperature, we will see it go up consistently and the end result will be more regular and passionate outreach from us to those who are far from God.

God wants our hearts to burn hot for evangelism. Outreach should flow naturally in our lives. We don't need to have the gift of evangelism. The truth is, most Christians do not have this specific spiritual gift, but we are all called to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13), we are called to be His witnesses (Acts 1:7-8), we are to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19-20). Every man, woman and child who has surrendered their heart to Christ is called to engage in God's plan to reach the world with His grace. Will you take time today, and every day, to identify your evangelistic temperature and seek to raise it by One Degree?

Application Suggestions (Some ways to raise the spiritual temperature):

Prayer– Commit to pray three minutes each day for those God has placed in your life who are spiritually disconnected. Make a list, a note card, a memo in your smart phone, and pray for God to draw them to himself. Pray for your heart to go out to these people. Pray for boldness to serve them, love them, and when the time is right, share your testimony and the message of Jesus.

If you have children, begin asking them about their friends who don't know Jesus. Begin praying with them for the salvation of their friends and for your lives and home to be a spiritual lighthouse.

Connecting with Lost People– Make time to be with those who are far from God. Look at your schedule and honestly evaluate how much time you spend with disconnected people each week. Be sure you don't get caught in the black hole of the church...press yourself out into the community.

Hearing and Sharing God Stories– Share about how God has worked in your life, or the lives of others. Tell stories about spiritual conversations you are having, about conversions, about steps people have taken forward in their journey of faith. Celebrate these!

Create Celebration Times– Make celebration natural. In your life, home, area of ministry...get public about celebration. Remember, the angels of heaven rejoice and so should we! (Luke 15)

Lead for Outreach– Commit to raise the temperature for evangelism wherever God has placed you. If you are a leader, don't just tend to your own evangelistic temperature, but help others turn things up a degree. Ask those you lead about their temperature, raise the temperature in your ministry area, lead in a way that makes your area of ministry more effective in connecting the disconnected.

Discussion and Reflection Questions (To be used with your ministry team, with your family, or any group of believers):

- What is your evangelistic temperature today?
- What could you do to raise the temperature by one degree? What could your ministry team do to raise the evangelistic temperature of your ministry by one degree?
- How much time do you spend with people who are spiritually lost – on a weekly basis? What can you do to increase this amount of

time? How can you take a step to make sure that the light of Jesus really shines when you are with people who are far from God?

- Who has God placed in your life that is far from God? How can others pray for you as you grow your relationship with this person?