

Developing a Thriving Relational Community Through Discipleship

Three Workshops in 2023:

1. **Workshop #1: Thriving Relational Discipleship Skills In Communication and Connection with each other and God**
2. **Workshop #2: Experiencing Thriving Joy with One Another and with God**
3. **Workshop #3: Passing on Thriving Experiential Relationship with Others Via God's *Hesed* Community.**



JOY

Gal. 5:22-23: Fruit of the Spirit
1 Cor. 13:4-8a

Workshop #1 Outline for Thriving Relational Discipleship Communication and Connection With Each Other and God April 15, 2023 Glenn Giles

1. Biblical Discipleship and its importance (Max).
 2. Introduction of the Check-In as a way to learn and practice thriving relational discipleship skills
 - Credit given to LK10.com
 - Life Skills needed not just intellectual knowledge of the Bible
 - Check-In Core Essentials = FLAN (Feelings, Listen, Attune, Needs)**
 3. Explanation of Check-In Steps and Procedure:
 - How to Make Check-in groups safe: Things to know and practice.
 - 1) **Confidentiality.** What is shared here stays here.
 - 2) **Anyone can “pass”** at any stage of the Check-In. Silence can be good. Silent participants can gain a lot of ministering to.
 - 3) **Time limitations** on sharing so everyone can participate and not be overwhelmed by others. Self-control and self-awareness is needed
 - 4) **Not giving advice unless the person asks** for it and gives you permission. Ask don't assume it is OK
 - 5) **Male/Female mixed groups** guidelines. **Absolute Purity** (1 Tim 5:1-2).
 - Be aware of “sparking”
 - Stassen and Gushee and the “Spark” (296-97)
 - lust comes not at the “spark of attraction” (Stassen and Gushee) but
 - “The issue . . . becomes what happens from that point of ‘sparking’”. “Sexual attraction is an inescapable dimension of human existence” but what we do with it is the heart issue Jesus is addressing. “The vicious cycle of sexual sin, particularly adultery, begins with the decision of the will not to redirect that spark of attraction. Instead, the spark is gradually fanned into an ever hotter flame”.
 - Today we will do same sex check-ins
 - 6) If triggered by something or something someone shared, bring it to your discipleship partner afterwards to talk about it
 - 6) **Check-in is a way of helping us become aware of our feelings and to bring them into obedience for Christ (2 Cor. 10:5: thoughts include feelings). Emotions can keep us from love and good deeds if one is not aware of them so that one can process them.**
- Steps:**
- a. **Prayer of surrender of our agendas and expression of gratitude.** This brings walls down and helps make a safe atmosphere.
 - b. **A round of appreciation** sharing: Up to a couple of sentences each.

c. **Feeling sharing for a couple of minutes: See feeling faces**

Illustrations: Cain in Gen 4:1-7, Mt 5:21-22, take thoughts captive = 2 Cor 10:5, Jesus dealt with feelings=Gospel of Matthew, especially in the Garden Mt 25:36-46 and

Active Listening for emotions/feelings while the other is sharing.

Illustration: James 1:19 = Quick to listen slow to speak: **See 10 tips for Active Listening**

d. **Attunement:** sharing back what emotions you heard and felt *without* trying to “fix” them or give advice. Not mimicking or parroting but communicating emotionally. Jesus had compassion =”splanizomai” gut level feeling for the person.

e. **Asking gentle curious clarifying questions if needed.**

-Ask permission to ask

-Ask questions. Don't make assertions

-Do not be intimidating

-Not insinuating

-Not trapping

-Not interrogating

-Not judgmental

-But accepting of where the person is

-Sincerely wanting to understand and connect emotionally

-Extending a safe place to them, one full of compassion

f. **Asking what the person needs**

1) Do they need anything or are they fine at this time?

2) Do they want prayer, possibly someone to pray for them right now?

3) Do they want us all to listen to Jesus with them and see what he puts on our hearts? Do you want us to do that right now?

4) Do they want any advice? Don't give advice if they do not want it at this time.

5) Do they want to ask if anyone has a story from their life in how they dealt with and worked through issues such as were shared.

g. **Closing round: One word feeling** you feel now at the end of this Check-In experience.

4. Demo Check-In

5. Check-in practice in groups of 3 or 4.

6. Commitment to continuing to practice this in your discipleship groups or other groups each week until the next Workshop this summer. You will be learning and helping others learn these skills and at the same time grow much closer to one another.

Remember FLAN:

Feelings

Listen

Attune

Need

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Workshop #2:

1. Workshop #1: Thriving Relational Discipleship Skills In Communication and Connection with each other and God
- 2. Workshop #2: Experiencing Thriving Joy with One Another and with God**
3. Workshop #3: Passing on Thriving Experiential Relationship with Others Via God's *Hesed* Community.



JOY

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Workshop #2 Joyful Thriving Discipleship

1. Thriving Discipleship, its importance, and its outcome: "Christ in you"

-The key element in Thriving Discipleship is to develop Christ's heart in us. I don't think there is any action without feelings behind it and if those feelings can be oriented to be Godly, then Godly actions will result. So, we are focusing on emotions/feelings as part of the wholistic formation of Christ's character in us.

-Britannica Dictionary definition of character: "the way someone thinks, feels, and behaves."

-Gal. 4:19: Paul says, "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you." Discipleship is about forming Christ and his character in you.

-But it is more than just character, it is us becoming Christ, Jesus living through us and letting his mind be ours (1 Cor 2:8-16) so our mind and thoughts are his.

-Paul states it well in Col 1:24-29:

27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. 29 To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

-It is not just about Spiritual Formation but Christ Formation.

-Song: "Would You be Poured Out Like wine."

2. FLAN and Check-in: It trains us to be like Christ in several ways:

-FLAN helps develop Christ's heart and character in us.

a. **Key things:** Feelings: become aware of your feelings and be able to express them to others and God as they affect our actions.

Listening to one another and to God: Really hearing another person brings joy, comfort, encouragement, and connection to them.

Attuning with another, sharing in what they feel, and asking gentle curious questions helps another person know someone cares and understands.

Needs: Asking about needs helps a person know that you care. Remember responses to this can be:

- 1) I don't need anything. I just needed to share my heart.
- 2) I would like prayers (then as if they want it now, or just in general and if now, who they would want to pray).
- 3) I would like everyone to take a moment now to listen to Jesus and see what he may put on your hearts to share with me.
- 4) I would like advice. Very Important. Remember never in the entire FLAN process do you give advice until they ask for it or you ask permission to give it. This creates safety for the person in need and communicates respect.

b. Now that these things are being developed into your **character**, Christ is becoming more in

you. Keep practicing them and you can now do this informally outside of your check-in group as well and feel free to vary it to your and others needs. Example:

3. Today:¹ Jesus' Joy, what is it and how to cultivate it in yourself and in others? Discipleship is all about helping to cultivate relationships of JOY for Jesus, Others, and You

Jesus

Others

You

-Phil 4:4 Rejoice = English and Greek it can mean bring joy to one another and/or be joyful (it is a command = Bring joy to one another)

-What is joy? I am defining Joy in the sense of the Hebrew word *shalom* in the sense of meaning relational peace, relational harmony, relational wholeness, relational completeness, relational prosperity, relational welfare, and relational tranquility. Everything is just the way it should be.

a. J = Jesus' Joy: Jesus brings joy to us and we to Him. Cultivating joy in another is what thriving discipleship is all about. It is what Jesus is all about; bringing joy to you. Jesus brings Joy to you and we to him. It is interconnected.

-Receive the joy God brings to us:

-Jesus is God's greeting to us: Jn 3:16; Lk 2:10

(Good tidings of great joy)

-Immanuel: God is glad to be with us Mt. 1:23; 28:19-20

-God wants me in his family: He adopted me in love: Eph 1:4-8

-He is not ashamed but proud of me (Heb. 2:11)

-Jesus' Joy. Heb. 12:2: Joy set before him = Joyful relationships with his people through his sacrifice.

-We bring Joy to God:

-John 1:11-13: Note God's feelings in being rejected as well as received.

-Lk 15:7, 10, 32 Rejoicing in heaven by God and angels when there is repentance (i.e. turning from sin so as not to hurt God and others any longer)

b. O = Giving Joy to Others:

1) Having Glad Presence: Joy is produced when someone feels from you **"I am glad to be with you"** (from Lifemodelworks.org)

2) Greeting one another: Joy happens when we joyfully greet one another when you see each other: Rom 16.

-What does it feel like if you come into a room where no one says hello or gives you a hug? What if they frown at you or give you ugly glances?

-What does it feel like when someone greets you with a sincere smile and gives you a hug when you come in and says they are glad to see you or that they are glad you are here?

-In which case do you feel joy?

-Practice: Take a minute and go greet someone you have not greeted yet today.

-How does it feel to be greeted? How does it feel to greet someone?

3) Eye to eye contact: This produces dopamine, this pleasure chemical is released in your brain and makes you feel pleasure, satisfaction, and motivation.

¹ Some of the things presented here in this workshop come from lifemodelworks.org and their materials including *Thrive Student Handbook: Track 1: Joy and Rest* from Life Model Works.

-Neuroscientists have shown making eye contact produces oxytocin, dopamine and other positive-feeling brain chemicals. In many cases eye contact is critical for improving relationships. (<https://smv.org/learn/blog/does-eye-contact-matter/#:~:text=Neuroscientists%20have%20shown%20making%20eye,is%20critical%20for%20improving%20relationships>,

-It helps people feel the joy of being noticed and important.

-Practice for a minute or so with someone with the mindset of thinking of good joyful things and wanting to communicate your wanting the best for them and for them to experience shalom (peace) and joy to the fullest. Become joy to them with your eye contact.

-Remember Heb. 3:12-13:

*See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But **encourage one another daily**, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.*

4. RCs on: When Relational Circuits (RCs) are on, you bring joy to others, yourself, God.

What is it like to have our RCs off and on?

RCs are OFF when...

- o I just want to make a problem, person or feeling go away.
- o I don't want to listen to what others feel or say.
- o My mind is "locked onto" something upsetting.
- o I just want to get away, fight or freeze.

RCs are ON when...

- o The person is more important than the problem.
- o I can be respectful, aware of, and interested in other's points of view.
- o I see this moment as a new situation where I can learn something.
- o I am not struggling with feeling isolated and alone.
- o I can join in give-and-take both verbally and nonverbally.
- o I am eager to talk with God about this situation (Immanuel)²

-Work at keeping your RCs on (more on this below).

5. Respect Capacity and Avoid Overwhelm: Become aware of when you overwhelm others and stop. It will bring joy to them.

What to watch out for:

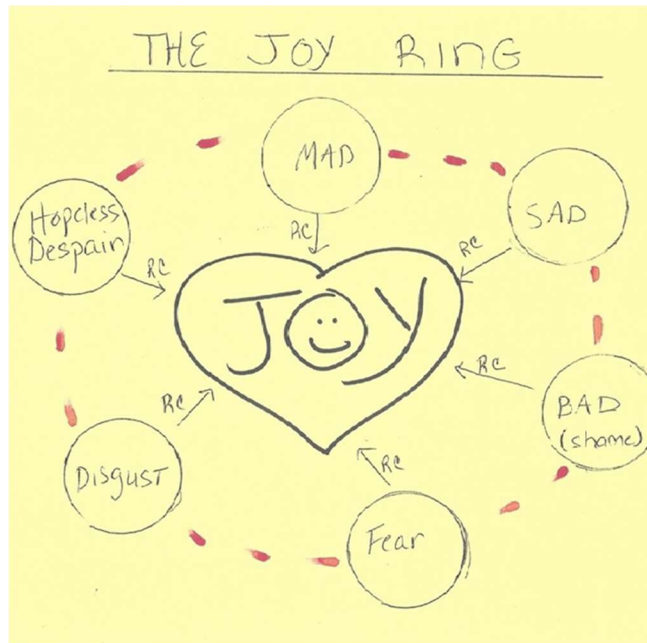
1. Staring or averting eyes
2. Withdraw
3. Forehead scrunched or furrowed.
4. Eyes big, closing, rapid eye movement, widen, closing, eyebrow rising
5. Tensing jaw muscles or cheek
6. leaning back or taking a step back
7. looking blank
8. crying
9. Frozen gaze
10. Fear or distress

Demo:

² RC Material taken from *Immanuel Lifestyle, Small Group Workbook*, by Margaret Webb, Jessica Handy, Leren Chamberlain.

c. Y = Joy to you: Bringing Joy to Yourself

-Getting on Jesus' Joy Island: "The joy ring"



i. How to bring joy to yourself and one another: I.e., Turn on your RCs and turn on other's RCs

1) Bring joy to yourself when you are off of Jesus' Joy Island:

- a) Practice shalom for your body
- b) Work on making relationships more important than problems
- b) Practice gratitude: Phil 4:8-9
- c) Get with someone who can listen and attune with you

2) Bring joy to others when they are off of Jesus' Joy island:

- a) Seek them out.
- b) Greet them letting them know you are glad to be with them.
- c) Actively listen to them.
- d) Ask Gentle curious questions.
- e) Attune with them.
- f) Ask what they need. Don't give advice without permission.
- g) Be with them.

4. What to do: Practice the following and continue your check-in groups or discipleship group to talk about how you feel in your experiences of doing these things using FLAN.

- a. Practice receiving Jesus' joy and giving joy to Jesus in your quiet times.**
- b. Practice having a heart to communicate to others "I am glad to be with you".**
- c. Practice greeting those you don't normally greet.**
- d. Practice eye-to-eye contact**
- d. Practice helping each other become aware of your RC's and how to turn them on in your small groups and in daily life. Become aware of overwhelm within yourself and others and stop. Let the other person know when you feel**

overwhelmed and ask the other person to stop what you are doing and give some space. The other person needs to respect the other person's capacity.
e. Share your victories in these things in your small groups and what your feelings are. Use FLAN to do this.

-Lets continue to practice FLAN JOY in your small groups, in church, with God, and in the community:

Feelings
Listening
Attuning
Needs

Jesus Joy
Others Joy
Your Joy

5. Sing Would you be poured out like wine

Would You Be Poured Out Like Wine

Jesus' request to Bring Joy to Him

Verse 1a

Would you be poured out
like wine upon the altar for Me?
Would you be broken
like bread to feed the hungry?

Verse 1b

Would you be so one
with Me that I may do just as I will?
Would you be light and life and love,
My word fulfill?

Our Commitment to Bring Joy to Him:

Verse 2a

Yes, I'll be poured out
like wine upon the altar for You.
Yes, I'll be broken
like bread to feed the hungry.

Verse 2b

Yes, I'll be so one
with You that You may do just as You will.
Yes, I'll be light and life and love,
Your word fulfill.

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6. Response and Closing Prayer

Developing a Thriving Relational Community Through Discipleship

First Three Discipleship Workshops:

1. Workshop #1: Thriving Relational Discipleship Skills In Communication and Connection with each other and God
2. Workshop #2: Experiencing Thriving Joy with One Another and with God
3. **Workshop #3: Passing on Thriving Experiential Relationship with Others Via God's *Hesed* Community.**



FLAN JOY
Gal. 5:22-23: Fruit of the Spirit
1 Cor. 13:4-8a

Workshop #3: Passing on Thriving Experiential Relationship with Others Via God's *Hesed* Community

Also Called:

NEW Discipleship: Passing On Joyful Relationships To Others Via God's *Hesed* Community

I. The Necessity of Biblical Discipleship:

A. Dietrich Bonhoeffer Stated:

“Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.”

B. Discipleship is simply helping one another become like Jesus.

C. But discipleship to be biblical must be infused with the love and respect of Christ or it can cause harm.

-This is what our *NEW* Discipleship intends to do.



II. What makes New Discipleship “New”?

A. New Discipleship is helping people become like Jesus through relationships that involve a healthy, safe, and joy-filled experience rather than an authoritarian-fearful environment. Christian = “Little Christ”

B. This “healthy” safe biblical discipleship includes:

1. Discipleship **to Jesus** (becoming like Him) not to other persons.
2. Discipleship happening in a **safe** setting of surrendered-to-Jesus agendas.
3. Discipleship must equip people for **Relational Communication and Connection** with each other and with God.

-Jesus, the Father, the Holy Spirit, and others become personal, present, and experienced in real time leading and guiding in transformational **relationship** with the disciple.

4. It does this by raising our collective and individual **EQ** (Emotional or Relational Intelligence). **It is all about relationship.**



5. **What is EQ** (IQ) or Relational Intelligence?

-Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is the ability to manage both your own emotions and understand the emotions of people around you. There are

five key elements to EI: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.³

-This is what the NEW Discipleship can do.

III. Review: Safe New **FLAN JOY** Discipleship

A. **Workshop #1: FLAN:** Skills Learned through Check-In

1. **Check-in** is a *discipleship vehicle* to learn **FLAN skills** that bring Joy to others and God.
2. **Safety:** Ground rules for making Check-in safe:



- a. Confidentiality
 - b. Anyone can “pass” at any stage of the Check-In.
They do not have to share.
 - c. Time limitations on sharing so everyone can participate and not be overwhelmed by others.
 - d. Not giving advice unless the person asks for it.
(This Check-In idea is adapted from lk10.org)
3. **FLAN Basics:**
F = Feelings expressed
L = Listening actively
A = Attune and ask gentle curious questions
N = Ask about needs
 4. **Use of FLAN**
 - a. FLAN must be experienced not just intellectually taught.
 - b. FLAN Skills Initially can be learned through Check-in and then be expanded to a daily lifestyle for all relational situations.
- #### B. **Workshop #2: JOY:** In Addition to FLAN, We Practice Giving and Receiving JOY.

J = Joy to Jesus (obedience)

O = Joy to Others (glad presence, greeting, RCs on, eye contact, no overwhelm)

Y = Joy to yourself (breathing, tapping, listening to God, practicing gratitude, getting with others who can help you FLAN)

C. Practicing **FLAN JOY** = New Discipleship

Feelings
Listening
Attuning
Needs

Jesus Joy
Others Joy
Your Joy

- How has this been going? Short Break for questions or to stretch.

³ Check-In is from: <https://mhanational.org/what-emotional-intelligence-and-how-does-it-apply-workplace>.

IV. Workshop #3: PASSING IT ON: The Great Commandments and Great Commission

A. FLAN JOY is a joyful, relational way to help **fulfill the two Greatest Commandments:**

- Love God and one another.
- Read: Mt. 22:34-40
- Practice FLAN JOY with One-another and the World
- Practicing FLAN JOY Will Create a HESED Community to Reach the World with God's relational love
- HESED = Lovingkindness
- HESED Community = Christ's Body the Church Practicing HESED.
- Result = The Community Brings Connection, JOY, Intimacy, and Salvation to the World.



B. FLAN JOY is a *vehicle* to **fulfill** the Greatest Commandments which are a *vehicle* to fulfill **the Great Commission** in Matthew 29:16-20.

“GO make disciples of all nations.”

-If we do this, the Great Commission will not become the Great Omission.

C. Steps In PASSING IT ON

1. Step #1: Work with God on having your Attachment Light⁴ ON

- a. Have Your Attachment Light On when you approach and engage with people.
- b. Attachment Light is OFF when:
 - 1) Arms folded
 - 2) You are distracted
 - 3) Looking at your watch or phone
 - 4) Eyes averted
 - 5) Fidgeting
 - 6) Non synchronizing communication

⁴ The concept of Attachment Light is from lifemodelworks.org.

- 7) Interrupting
 - 8) Showing contempt or disgust or dismissive or showing anger
 - 9) Not responding to questions, not listening
 - 10) Walking away or checking out
- c. Attachment Light is ON when:
- 1) Have good eye contact
 - 2) Leaning in interestedly and actively listening
 - 3) Relaxed with soft face
 - 4) Open Posture
 - 5) Attentive, head nodding, conversational, engaging
 - 6) Attuning and asking gentle curious questions
 - 7) Focus in on them
 - 8) Communicating verbally and with body language that you are glad to be with them
 - 9) Warm, safe to be with, non-judgmental
 - 10) Focused
- d. Results:**
- 1). If it is on, you will be communicating to others that you want to be part of their life and work toward getting to know them and have a relationship with them.
 - 2) This is all about how to orient yourself toward approaching and giving others FLAN JOY. This is especially true for those who do not know Jesus.
 - 3) If you and I can work on having our attachment light on when we interact with the lost, it will be inviting to them to be part of our lives and experience Jesus in us.
- e. Discussion Time #1**
- 1) What feelings do you have with this? FLAN a bit with each other.
 - 2) What is the most difficult thing for you in keeping your attachment light on?
 - 3) How might you plan to practice having your attachment light on more?

-Stretch Break

2. Step #2: Join with Jesus and His Spirit in what they are doing.⁵

- a. Ask God to give you eyes to see where He is working in you and others.
- b. Slow down and watch and notice what God is doing in your and others lives. Seek to see his working with people you interact with.

⁵ Adapted from Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*, (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2008).

- c. Cultivate your relational skills of FLAN JOY with God and one another
- d. Watch for:
 - 1) The Fruit of the Spirit** being manifested:
 - “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law” (Gal 5:23-24).
 - Is God leading you to practice these with someone who needs God?
 - God is at work. All of these involve relationship. In what is God leading you?
 - 2) Conviction:**
 - “And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment” (Jn 16:8).
 - Do you feel convicted? Do you see guilt or conviction in others?
 - 3) Expression of Feelings:** When you see them expressed, God is working. People may be struggling. They may be crying out for help.
 - Relationship with God and others is being tested.
 - 4) People Talking about Spiritual or Relational Things.** This shows their interest in God. He is working.
 - 5) Reception of You into their lives** (Lk 10:8; Mt 10:1ff)
 - 6) Change or turning toward God and repentance, i.e.,** life adjustment to make relationships better.

-Discussion Time #2:

- 1) Share about someone anonymously who needs God that you see any of these things in which the Holy Spirit is at work.
- 2) Who comes to mind whom God may be leading you to join in his work?
- 3) Brainstorm and ask Jesus about how you might join in God’s work in this person. Make a plan. Ask God what that plan should look like.

3. Step #3: Seek Others and Practice FLAN JOY with Them, sharing the Gospel.

- a. “Go” = Seek to interact and bring joy to others and new people.
- b. Plan to meet new people and implement the heart skills of FLAN JOY ministering to them.
- c. Consider FLAN JOY as a ministry, a ministry of compassion.
- d. Seek others, minister with FLAN JOY and share the Gospel of Jesus with them.

V. This is What Discipleship Is All About

- It is to Prepare us to be like Christ to Minister Jesus to Others.
- Let’s learn these skills.

-Practice FLAN JOY, The NEW SAFE LIFE-GIVING DISCIPLESHIP!

VI. Prayer time for all of this.