



Extreme Home Make-Over, Life Edition, is a 6 part discussion series that covers the topics of:

- Part – Retooling your Schedule
- Part 2 Retooling your Finances
- Part 3 – Retooling your Emotions
- Part 4 – Retooling your Friendships
- Part 5 – Retooling your Marriage
- Part 6 – Retooling Your Eternity

This discussion series was designed to accompany a series of sermons given at Cottonwood in the fall of 2008. You can request those sermons through the church office if you are interested.

However, these discussions are helpful as they are as well.

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Part One: Retool Your Schedule!

Icebreaker: Share a time when you were late for something important.

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”
Matthew 6:33

- 1.) What would it look like to “seek **FIRST** His kingdom and His righteousness” first thing every morning? First thing every week? First thing in every major decision? What keeps you from doing so?
- 2.) Busy-ness is a common American struggle, how do you think seeking God first could help you with busy-ness? Or, how has seeking God first helped you to deal with busy-ness in the past?

Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'
Matthew 22:37-39

- 3.) How have you let people or activities crowd God out of your life?
- 4.) When was a time when your priorities in “*Loving your neighbor*” got mixed up? (i.e. children crowding out your spouse, others crowding out your family, work/school crowding out your church family...)

Please take a few minutes to look over at ‘The Grid’ on the back of this page.

- 5.) Which of these areas do you tend to overlook or ignore when making priorities in your schedule?

Prayer: Share one action you need to take in order to ‘re-tool your schedule’ so that your schedule reflects God’s priorities in your life.

Pray for each other to take these actions this week.

'THE GRID'

Use these principles to help you evaluate and sort out the potential jobs, projects, activities and commitments in order to make the most of your time.

- 1.) **The Whole-heartedness Principle: Whatever you do, do it wholeheartedly & to the best of your ability. If you can't do a good job on it, don't take it on.**

Check out these verses: Eccl. 9:10, Col. 3:17, Col. 3:23, Pr. 22:29

- 2.) **The Work Day Principle: Work hard during the 'day', but not during the 'night.' Take time to relax and wind down after you work. (Obviously if you work nights, this reverses!)**

Check out these verses: John 9:4, John 11:9, Ps. 127:2

- 3.) **The Sabbath Principle: This is one of the Ten Commandments! God has designed us to function optimally when we take a day of rest & reflection each week. This day is primarily to remember God and grow in Him.**

Check out these verses: Ex. 20:8-11

- 4.) **The 'Finishing' Principle: Finish a project or task today if at all possible, or else things will pile up quickly.**

Check out this verse: Ruth 3:18

- 5.) **The People Principle - Always put people before projects/things. Things don't last, but people do. Christ modeled this by putting people before everything else!**

Check out this verse: John 3:16, 1 John 3:16

- 6.) **The Accountability/Submission Principle - Sometimes we need someone else to guide or counsel us in making decisions and setting priorities.**

Check out this verse: Eph. 5:21

- 7.) **The Time & Eternity Principle – Before adding something to your schedule ask yourself: What will be the effect of this 10 years from now? What will be the effect of this for eternity? Does this have any long-lasting or eternal value?**

Check out this verse: 1 Cor. 3:12-15



Part Two: Retool Your Finances!

Icebreaker: When was a time when someone lost their trust in you? Or when has a time when you lost your trust in another person?

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.” Proverbs 3:5-10

1. When has it been difficult for you to trust God with your finances?
2. How have you been ‘wise in your own eyes’ when it comes to money or financial matters? Why do you think it is such a temptation to deal with money on our own terms, rather than submitting to ‘God’s financial plan’ for our lives?
3. Despite the amazing promise in these verses, what experiences in life or in the church have caused your attitude or understanding about ‘giving to God’ to be unbalanced or incomplete?

“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.” Matt. 6:24

4. How have earning money, paying bills, debt, or financial worries negatively affected your devotion to God?

“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”

2 Cor. 9:8-9

5. How have you experienced freedom/abundant grace as a result of letting God order your finances? What is a step you can take today toward ‘doing your finances’ God’s way?

Prayer: Share one action you need to take in order to 're-tool your finances' so that your finances better reflect God's plan for this area of your life.

Pray for each other to take these actions this week.



Part Three: Retool Your Emotions!

Icebreaker: What is the best fruit you have ever eaten? What about the worst?

“By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.” Matt. 7:16-17

1. Our emotional lives can be likened to a tree...when our emotions are ‘under control’ they produce good fruit, when they get ‘out of control’ bad fruit results. What is some of the good fruit emotions can produce (when they are under control)? How have you experienced your emotions getting out of control? What was the result?
2. What would you say to a person who regularly lashes out in anger, but says, “I can’t help it, that’s just my personality”? (This example could apply to any negative/ugly emotion getting out of control!)

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

3. Why do you think it is important for us to confess and admit our fault/sin when bad fruit results from ‘negative emotions’ over-influencing our lives?

Here is a four step process for identifying & removing ‘bad fruit’ from our emotional lives and allowing God to produce ‘good fruit’ instead (Review the examples on the back of this sheet):

- 1.) Confess it – 1 John 1:9 (When your emotions get out of control or rule your life, the first step is to admit that you have been wrong.)
 - 2.) Pray for God’s help ... to see things from His perspective - James 1:5 (Ask God for wisdom.)
 - 3.) Memorize/meditate on appropriate Scriptures which help you identify God’s perspective on the ugly emotion - Rom. 12:2 (Renew your mind ... don’t conform to the world’s thinking.)
 - 4.) ‘Engraft’ appropriate Scripture which will help you to bear good fruit/emotions - John 15:7-8 (Think about, read, memorize, meditate on God’s Word until it becomes your natural way of thinking so that it can bear good fruit in your life!)
4. Which step (or steps) seems to be the most difficult for you to take in order to get rid of bad fruit and cultivate good fruit in your emotional life? Is there any ‘bad fruit’ in your life that you need to apply this process to?

Prayer: Share one action you need to take in order to ‘re-tool your emotions’ so that you more consistently get rid of bad fruit and cultivate good fruit in your life.

Pray for each other to take these actions this week.

A Few Examples of the Four Step Process:

- When things get out of control or balance -

How to get rid of bad fruit and cultivate good fruit in your emotions

Fear

1. Confess it as sin – I John 1:9 ...
2. Pray for God's help ... and see things from His perspective ... James 1:5
3. Meditate on:
Psalm 27:1 - "The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?" Psalm 27:1
Psalm 46:2 - "Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea..."
Psalm 56:4 - "In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me"
4. Engraft: Psalm 23 - *The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want....*

Anxiety

1. Confess it as sin – I John 1:9 ...
2. Pray for God's help ... and see things from His perspective ... James 1:5
3. Meditate on:
Isaiah 35:4 - "Say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you."
Psalm 139:23-24 - "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."
Psalm 94:19 - "When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul."
4. Engraft: Philippians 4:6-7 - *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

Anger

1. Confess it as sin – I John 1:9 ...
2. Pray for God's help ... and see things from His perspective ... James 1:5
3. Meditate on:
Psalm 37:8 - "Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil."
Proverbs 15:18 - "A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel."
4. Engraft:
Psalm 103:8 - "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love."
Psalm 145:8 - "The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love."
Proverbs 16:32 - "Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city."
Proverbs 19:11 - "A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense."



Part Four: Retool Your Friendships!

Icebreaker: Who was one of your most memorable friends from childhood?

Ask one person to read Ephesians 4:20-32 aloud (found on the back of this sheet).

1. Re-read Eph. 4:25. When was a time you were tempted not to “speak truthfully” in a relationship? Did you give in to temptation (lie, exaggerate, flatter, gossip, etc.) or did you overcome the temptation? What was the result?
2. Re-read Eph. 4:26-27. Why do you think it is so important to “not let the sun go down while you are still angry” in your relationships? What can be the result if we let our anger go un-dealt with?
3. Re-read Eph. 4:29. How can words be our greatest ally or our greatest enemy in relationships? How have you experienced this in your life?
4. How can Ephesians 4:29 help us to determine when to speak and when not to speak? If you followed the guidelines in this verse, how might your speech change to become more grace-filled?
5. Re-read Eph. 4:32. How would focusing on Christ, His forgiveness, grace and love toward you help you to have better relationships?

Prayer: Share one step God has shown that you need to take in order to ‘re-tool your relationships’ this week.

Pray for each other to take these actions this week.

Ephesians 4:20-32 (NIV)

You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. ²¹Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²²You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.



Part Five: Retool Your Marriage!

Icebreaker: What 1 or 2 details were most memorable to you about your wedding day?

Read Ephesians 5:25-33 aloud:

"²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰for we are members of his body. ³¹"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³²This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."

1. **Husbands only:** Ephesians 5:25 says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." How does this verse raise the bar in your understanding of the primary duty of a husband to **love his wife**?
2. **Wives only:** Ephesians 5:33 says, "...the wife must respect her husband." How does understanding this as 'unconditional respect' raise the bar in your understanding of the primary duty of a wife **respect her husband**?
3. **Both:** What hinders your efforts to fulfill the primary job duties listed in Ephesians 5:33 for husbands to sacrificially & unconditionally love their wives and wives to sacrificially and unconditionally respect their husbands?
4. **Split off as couples, look into your spouse's eyes and ask the appropriate question below:**
 - Husbands ask your wife: "What is one thing you would like me to do better to make you feel loved?"
 - Wives ask your husband: "What is one thing you would like me to do better to make you feel respected?"

Prayer: Hold hands & pray as couples, that God would empower you to take the step your spouse shared in question #4 in order to 're-tool your marriage' this week.



Part Six: Retool Your Eternity!

Icebreaker: When was a time when you made a purchase, but later regretted making it?

Read Ecclesiastes 12:1-14 (It's on the back of this page.)

1. Someone once said, "What you sow in your 20's & 30's you reap in your 40's & 50's." What is a good choice you made in the past that is now bearing good fruit in your life today?
2. When was a time you felt God calling you to follow Him or obey Him in some way and you delayed (or failed) to obey Him? What was the result?
3. Read Ecc. 12:6-8. How would thinking about the end of your life, motivate you to make your life count for God today?
4. Read Ecc. 12:13-14. Why do you think today is the best day to start living for God?
5. What is a choice or change you can make today that will empower you to enjoy more of God's blessed life tomorrow?

Prayer: Pray for the person on your left, that God would empower that person to make the choice he/she shared in question #5 in order to 're-tool their eternity' this week.

Ecclesiastes 12:1-14

¹Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them" - ²before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars grow dark, and the clouds return after the rain; ³when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop, when the grinders cease because they are few, and those looking through the windows grow dim; ⁴when the doors to the street are closed and the sound of grinding fades; when men rise up at the sound of birds, but all their songs grow faint;

⁵when men are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets; when the almond tree blossoms and the grasshopper drags himself along and desire no longer is stirred. Then man goes to his eternal home and mourners go about the streets. ⁶Remember Him—before the silver cord is severed, or the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, or the wheel broken at the well, ⁷and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

⁸"Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher."Everything is meaningless!"

⁹Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. ¹⁰The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true. ¹¹The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—given by one Shepherd. ¹²Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body.

¹³Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.