

The Environment of Grace, Truth, and Discipline

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I. Introduction.

- A. There is a certain kind of environment that is more enabling than disabling.
- B. Environment is both culture and atmosphere that results in certain things.

II. Things that generate culture and atmosphere.

- A. Values.
- B. Patterns of relating to one another.
- C. The ripple effect of leadership.
- D. The response to events.
- E. Systems.

III. What kind of environment did Jesus generate in different environments?

- A. Matthew 4:17-25
- B. Matthew 5:1-16
- C. Matthew 8:1-17.
- D. Matthew 9.
- E. Matthew 15.
- F. Matthew 21.
- G. Matthew 4.

IV. How we generate environments in ministry that allow people to encounter and become like Christ and not become caught up in activity.

A. Keys to building environment.

1. Grace.

- a. There needs to be a balance between grace and truth.
- b. There is a vertical dimension to grace—God gives us what we do not deserve.
- c. We are to give each other what we do not deserve.

- d. The question of grace is how we treat each other. (John 13:34-35, I Corinthians 13:4-8)
- e. Grace makes an environment that does not condemn.
- f. Grace provides a safe place for us to work out our salvation. (Romans 8:1)
- g. Grace makes an environment that removes shame. (Isaiah 61:10)
- h. Guilt is not used to motivate in a place of grace.
- i. Sin is to be brought out in the open to be dealt with. (John 3:19, Proverbs 28:13)

2. Truth.

- a. Truth sets us free. (John 8:31-33)
- b. It is difficult to teach truth without trust.
- c. Trust gives permission to have a teachable heart.
- d. Truth that we submit to is the truth that changes us.

3. Trust.

- a. This requires patience, time and perseverance.
- b. Humility trusts God and others with me.
- c. There is an idea of submission involved with humility. (I Peter 5)
- d. Process of forming trust.
 - 1. Permission is given.
 - 2. Affirmation.
 - 3. Empowering others.
 - 4. Protecting weaknesses.

4. Safety and nurture.

- a. Worth is often degenerated into what a person can contribute.
- b. Each person has intrinsic worth.
- c. God is love so there should be a place of compassion and help. (I John 4:7-8)

- d. There should be objectivity, openness and sensitivity.
- e. Our nurture is in the context of reaching the lost and broken.
- f. This does not mean that Jesus is safe—the goal is always restoration and wholeness.

Application questions:

1. Which elements of environment do you feel the church struggles with the most today? Explain.

2. How does grace practically look in discipleship?

3. What can you do to build greater trust with those you work with? Explain.
