

“God Space” Training Module (75 minutes)

(To be used in conjunction with the God Space Pocket Card and the “God Space” book which can be purchased at Amazon.com. This training module provides an overview of the big ideas from the “God Space” book. Its primary purpose is for training and equipping God’s people for outreach events and short-term mission trips.)

I. Intro to God Space (15 minutes)

1. Pass out the God Space cards. Spend **10** minutes in your group(s) talking about which of the 5 definitions of God Space resonates with you the most, and why. Then discuss this question; how did Jesus create God Space? Give specific examples!

2. Read the following scriptures. Afterwards take **5** minutes to discuss this thought; God has to do something in us before He can do something through us. We cannot create God Space for others if we do not embody it ourselves.

- a. “Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourselves but to God; (I Corinthians 6:19 GNT)
- b. “Therefore I exhort you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice—alive, holy, and pleasing to God—which is your reasonable service.” (Romans 12:1 NET)
- c. “In Christ Jesus, God made us new people so that we would spend our lives doing the good things he had already planned for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:10 ERV)

II. How do we create “God Space” in practical, doable, and authentic ways in our day-to-day worlds? In the spirit of Romans 12:1, let’s discuss what it could look like to offer our bodies (our hearts, our eyes, our hands, our ears, our minds, and our mouths) to God. (**60 minutes**)

1. If our hearts are the heart of the matter to God, let’s start by offering our hearts to God by taking the “Jesus Test”. (**10 minutes**) / **Read Chapters 1 & 2**
 - a. (**Big idea**) How we react to people who do not believe and behave like we do could be the truest indicator of whether our heart attitudes are like those of Jesus who was known as a “friend of sinners”.

Notes for leaders: You can either copy the “Jesus Test” off and hand it out to everyone, or read each question and have everyone jot down their scores as you go along. You can also find it online at <http://www.godsgps.com/storage/God%20Space%20Questionnaire.pdf>. Which

ever the case may be, please make sure everyone understands the big idea of this test. These 10 questions are an attempt to help God's people wrestle with the reality of what it might look like to be a "friend of sinners" in this day and age.

The following 10 questions are intended to help you reflect on the extent to which you are seeing your world the way Jesus did. Prayerfully ponder each question before jotting down a number from 1 to 10 which best depicts your heart-felt response. When you have finished add your scores together to come up with a grand total.

Sometimes

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Always

1. Can you overlook un-Christlike attitudes and lifestyles in order to befriend those who do not believe and behave like you do?
2. Are you free from judgmental thoughts when you are around people who do not believe or behave like you do?
3. Do you consistently seek to understand not-yet-Christians before seeking to be understood by them?
4. Are you patient enough to wait for the not-yet-Christians in your life to ask you for your opinion?
5. Do you like people who are far from God?
6. Do people who are far from God like you? For example, are you invited to their "party-parties"?
7. Does your body language communicate an openhearted acceptance to people who don't believe and behave like you do?
8. Are you able to communicate unconditional acceptance to not-yet-Christians without endorsing their lifestyles?
9. In your relationships with not-yet-Christians, do you offer kindness more than "rightness"?
10. Do you have compassion for the not-yet-Christians in your life?

Consider the following comments as they relate to your final score.

90 to 100: Congratulations! Don't be surprised if other Christians frequently misunderstand you. If Jesus was misunderstood for being a "friend of sinners", so will you!

70 to 89: You must decrease, Jesus must increase, one heart attitude at a time. If most of your friends are Christians, join a new club, or pursue a hobby with others outside the church walls. Make a commitment to be in closer proximity to people who are far from God. Don't be surprised if God uses lost people to save you from the attitudes in your heart that not-yet like His.

Under 70: Jesus needs to do something in you before he can do something through you. Read "*The Prodigal God*" by Tim Keller. Begin each day with this prayer: "*Lord Jesus, help me to see the*

people who will cross my path this day the way you do". Then pay attention to those "Holy nudges" as you walk through your day.

*** Discuss which of the ten questions challenges you the most and why?**

2. Offering our eyes to God so that we can see our world with "Jesus glasses".
(10 minutes) / Read Chapter 3
 - a. **(Big idea)** There is a direct correlation between how we view the world and what we are moved to do about it. When we start seeing the world the way Jesus does, we are moved to do something about it in His name.
 - b. It's easy to miss something we're not looking for, so how might we increase our awareness? What do you think the difference is between seeing and noticing? **(5)**
 - c. If you were given an assignment to show up in your world and listen with your eyes and see with your ears, how would you go about doing that? **(5)**
 - d. *Faith Adventure Challenge:* For the next week, make this your prayer throughout the day. **Lord Jesus, help me to see the people who will cross my path the way you do.** Pay attention to impressions you get throughout the day. Talk with God about how He might have you respond to what you're noticing.

3. Offering our hands to God in ways that demonstrate God's love with "no strings attached". **(10 minutes) / Read Chapter 4**
 - a. **(Big idea)** Good deeds, create good will which helps to open the heart to the good news!
 - b. Ravi Zacharias says that "We must find the back door to people's hearts because the front door is heavily guarded." Spend **(5)** minutes discussing the differences between a front door and a back door approach and whether or not you agree with Dr. Zacharias.
 - c. What are some practical ways you've seen or heard of this being lived out? **(5)**
 - d. *Faith Adventure Challenge:* Brainstorm ways God might have you demonstrate His love to others with "no strings attached". Here are some things to consider:
 - Do something out of the ordinary / Make sure to meet real needs
 - Consider your resources of time, money, and manpower
 - Timing is sometimes everything / Do it in the Spirit's power

4. Offering our ears to God by seeking to understand others before we seek to be understood.

(10 minutes) / Read Chapter 5

- a. **(Big idea)** Nothing creates God Space faster than to “Listen for Heaven’s Sake”. If we want to be heard in a culture weary of words, then we must be quick to listen and slow to speak. James 1:19
- b. Take **(5)** minutes to take the listening test. **Notes for leaders:** You can either copy the listening test off and hand it out to everyone, or read each question and have everyone jot down their scores as you go along. You can also find it online at <http://www.godsgps.com/storage/listeningtest>

When others are talking to me:

I find myself finishing their sentences. ___ rarely ___ occasionally ___ often ___ usually

I give my opinions before hearing them out. ___ rarely ___ occasionally ___ often ___ usually

I get restless and impatient. ___ rarely ___ occasionally ___ often ___ usually

I lose track of what is being said. ___ rarely ___ occasionally ___ often ___ usually

I fidget with objects. ___ rarely ___ occasionally ___ often ___ usually

I mentally rehearse what I'm going to say next. ___ rarely ___ occasionally ___ often ___ usually

I take control of the conversation. ___ rarely ___ occasionally ___ often ___ usually

I interrupt with frequent comments or questions. ___ rarely ___ occasionally ___ often ___ usually

I try to diagnose and fix their problems. ___ rarely ___ occasionally ___ often ___ usually

I worry about how to respond instead of listening. ___ rarely ___ occasionally ___ often ___ usually

I tell them how to fix their problems. ___ rarely ___ occasionally ___ often ___ usually

I tend to contradict what has been said. ___ rarely ___ occasionally ___ often ___ usually

I misinterpret what has been said. ___ rarely ___ occasionally ___ often ___ usually

I answer before gaining real understanding. ___ rarely ___ occasionally ___ often ___ usually

Would those who know you well call you a good listener?

After you talk briefly about how you did on the test take **(5)** minutes to discuss the following questions. Why do you think most Christians flunk this test? Do you think it's possible that we are reaping what we have sown in the culture? I. E. Not-yet Christians are not listening to us because we are not listening to them.

5. Offering our God-given inquisitiveness (wonder) to ponder what we're hearing, seeing, and feeling. **(10 minutes) / Read Chapter 6**

- a. **(Big idea)** If people are not ready for the answers you'd like to share with them maybe it would be wiser to ask more questions instead. We are often 1 good "wondering" question away from a significant spiritual conversation.
- b. Take **(5)** minutes to discuss the following thoughts on the power of the question mark. "Wondering" into someone's heart requires a willingness to be out of control, an inquisitive explorative nature, the patience to listen, and the desire to help others by raising the kinds of questions that help them make their own spiritual discoveries. A good wondering question possesses three qualities: It's intelligent, it's open-ended, and it demonstrates that we have been listening to them. Why is there so much power in the question mark?

* *Questions Are Nonthreatening* - Although people grow weary of hearing our answers, they will entertain questions all day. Questions make the listener far more than a listener but an active *participant* in the conversation.

* *Questions communicate Humility* - The problem with the Christian isn't that he has answers; it's that has *too many* answers to questions that people are not asking.

* *Questions Allow listeners to Discover Truth for Themselves* - There is great power when we discover truth for ourselves, even if we had help getting there.

* *Good questions are needed to change in one's thinking about God* - Good questions stir one to contemplate and consider life from a fresh vantage point. They help people make the journey in their minds to new places.

Faith Adventure Challenge: Take **(5)** minutes to partner up, take turns talking about a person God has put on your heart, provide some context of your conversational and relational history, wonder together about them, then formulate some wondering questions to ask them.

5. Offering our lips to God so that we might share our God story and / or God's story. **(10 minutes) / Read Chapter 8 & 9**

- a. **(Big idea)** "If coming to know Christ is the greatest thing that's happened to you, then the greatest thing you can do for someone else is to share this with them." (Dr. Bill Bright) Always, always, always ask for permission before you begin to share.

- b. Take **(5)** minutes to partner up and share your God stories. Be clear and concise! Do not over-supply and kill the demand. Share constructive criticism with each other.
- c. Take **(5)** minutes to partner up and share God's story in a clear and compelling way. If a not-yet Christian asked you how to become a Christian imagine yourself answering this question in 2 minutes or less.