

Dirt to Use

...

Restoring relationships one heart at a time



Everything begins with God's presence.

- We are each loved and called by Him, just as we are, to embrace our foundational purpose: loving God and others.
- Drawing closer to God prepares us for this call and helps us to realize He has always been with us.
- As we become firm in who we are in Christ, our trust grows, and it gets easier to accept ourselves, our story, and others.
- In time we see differences less and God more, and an expectancy of togetherness builds. We get creative!
- It can be hard to figure out how to connect, yet simply exploring each other's story helps us break through our doubts and relate to each other on a heart level.
- Every story, every life, contains precious experiences, hurts, or seeds that God wants to reuse for planting and growing together with the world around us.
- We all embody our Father's vision of unity and justice, His power to create beauty from darkness, and the ability to use our heart to restore something beautiful on earth as it is in heaven.

Restoring Relationships on Earth

It's hard to connect and grow with those who are different from us.

Where do we start? What do we do together? How do we stay connected?

D-U is a tangible, fun way for us *to simply be together and grow.*

It gives us a script until we no longer need one!

Each step of the D-U teaching process expresses a principle and action of engaging with God, self, and others.

Relationship Development

- Dirt is a principle of being present, sharing our self with God and others just as we are.
- Form is a principle of preparing, listening to God and others without pretense.
- Set/Fire is a principle of trust, accepting circumstance, self, and others especially when it's hard.
- Color is a principle of expectancy, exploring our deepest stories, heart, and design together.
- Use is a principle of planting, growing together by giving and reusing what's in our heart/story.

Dirt

... the Lord formed the man from the dust of the ground ... (GENESIS 2:7).

We are all created equal

Each person's life on earth is like a ball of clay waiting to be formed and used.

No matter our circumstance, God desires to love, shape, and use every one of us.

If you leave a ball of clay to sit without a creator, it will eventually become hard and turn into a pile of dirt.

God does not intend for our lives to simply be a story of "dust to dust." He wants a loving relationship with us, which extends far beyond earth into eternity.



BEGIN WITH A BALL OF CLAY

... the Lord formed the man from the dust of the ground ... (GENESIS 2:7).

Prepare our minds and hearts

We must realize that God's love will require us to expand our minds and hearts over time, to step out and believe something we do not understand ... to become vulnerable.

God wants to lovingly hold each one of us in His hands.

He wants to soften and prepare us for countercultural closeness.

Hard clay is rigid and challenging to use, yet as we allow God into our life more and more, we will become softer and easier for Him to mold.



SOFTEN & FLATTEN INTO CIRCLE

... the Lord formed the man from the dust of the ground ... (GENESIS 2:7).

Allow God and let go

Understanding our true purpose begins with knowing we are all made to be like our heavenly Father.

He is perfect and we are not, so as we get to know Him, He lovingly trims away the parts of our lives that hurt or hinder us from realizing our true purpose.

Sometimes God trims out things like guilt, shame, noise, selfishness, addiction, or other things in our lives suddenly.

Other times this is a longer process of letting go. No matter what, God sees and loves us through our dirt for who we really are: His child.



TRIM OUT CORNERS

... the Lord formed the man from the dust of the ground ... (GENESIS 2:7).

His image in us

Not only does God want you to discover who you are in Him, but He also wants you to see His image, value, and purpose in others.

It can be hard to see greatness or even sameness in someone else, especially if they are seemingly very different from you.

Yet this is exactly what God hopes for, as He loves us. Enjoying His love and sharing it with others despite their dirt is our purpose.

This image resides in each one of us; our foundational shape is the same.



DISPLAY CROSS SHAPE

God's promises are revealed in His presence.

Actions: Being present, sharing yourself/your attention with God and others

- Come into God's presence in quietness—Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name . . .
- Invite God's light and His promises into your life space and daily moments.
- Be present in Him with those closest to you, sharing God with them through you as a vessel.

Form

... our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we are all the work of thy hand (ISAIAH 64:8).

Draw near to Him

God thoughtfully formed each of us from His image to come closer to Him every day.

Drawing closer allows us to realize we are moving toward something greater than ourselves, greater than our past and our dreams. We can hear Him calling us through His word and His story.

He's offering grace like no one else can. God wants to reveal how moldable we are in spite of what we perceive as inability or imperfection.

He lifts us up from the ground, from our past and former self, into an upright position with Him.

As we listen to God's direction, we see from a new perspective and begin to realize who we are becoming with Him.



RAISE SIDES UP

... our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we are all the work of thy hand (ISAIAH 64:8).

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DISPLAY CROSS SHAPE

... our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we are all the work of thy hand (ISAIAH 64:8).

His power, peace, and purpose in us

Pressing into God creates stability and boundaries in our life that help us take shape. A foundation of power and peace builds in us as we experience God's pure, forgiving love.

Coming to Him in quietness allows us to hear His word and share our cares with Him. This act of love and adoration mends us to Him.

God used Jesus's life on earth as a perfect mold for us to resemble and rest in. His example holds us together and provides an image for us to identify with so we don't try to fit into the empty categories and expectations of the world.



PRESS INTO MOLD SHAPE

... our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we are all the work of thy hand (ISAIAH 64:8).

Jesus's love & story in us

We are one with God and cannot be separated from His love. We each have a story of God's love in us, which is what makes us whole.

God created a perfect garden for His children to work and grow together in. We made a wrong choice in this garden, but God didn't give up on us. He sacrificed His son to provide the gift of a new choice that leads us back to Him.

Our life and our story are that journey back to His perfect garden in heaven. As we realize our direction and oneness with God, the story in us and how it has uniquely prepared us to love others becomes clear. Every life is an extension of God's story. All we have to do is listen



WAIT

God's story prepares us to use our story.

Actions: Preparing, listening to the story of God, self, and others

- Listen to God's whole story in a way you can understand (lifelong).
- Listen to God retell your story in His words. (He was there the whole time).
- Listen to the story of others without pretense, judgment, or solutions.

Set / Fire

And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ . . . will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast (1 PETER 5:10).

Acknowledge our impurities and brokenness

We were each formed differently to reflect Him in our own unique way. We all have individual weak spots and imperfections.

As we embody God's love and peace, we can allow Him to reveal, refine, and restore these areas of our lives.

God wants us to show Him the parts of us that hurt and/or separate us from Him the most.

God knows about our past, the pride-filled victories, what others have done to us, what we have done to ourselves.

He sees our deepest cracks and impurities and wants to make us whole again. "Do not hide what God wants to heal" (Pastor Dominick).



POINT OUT CRACKS

And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ . . . will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast (1 PETER 5:10).

Obtain closeness through trials & suffering

Displaying our brokenness can make us feel sad, weak, ugly, and ashamed. Yet as we give our deepest hurts, fears, and sins to God, He repairs and strengthens us.

This can be a time of excruciating waiting as we trust God to move in our lives. It can also feel like going through fire as we process past pain, unforgiveness, suffering, regret, etc.

God does not want us to go through this process alone. He holds us through the fire as He fuses our brokenness with the strength and peace of his love.

God wants us to have faith that our past and present pain is in His hands as we rest in Him.

God cradles us in our suffering and gives us each other to weep with and hold on to. We will not fall apart.



SET ASIDE TO DRY OUT
& NOT BE FIRED

And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ . . . will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast (1 PETER 5:10).

Have faith that God can use our brokenness for His glory

It's hard at first to accept who we are, to accept who others are, and to see beauty and purpose in the broken.

Yet, often, it is our sin and suffering that awakens us to how much we need God's embrace in our lives. Jesus suffered and died for us so that we can live life fully.

God's power and love fill and fuse our weak spots. We become new in Him and no longer need to rehearse our fears, sins, and regrets, or those of others.

As we experience peace and wholeness with God, we are safer to accept and use our grief and gifts. Sometimes the parts of us that hurt the most are the parts that prepare us to love the deepest.



PICK UP AND SHOW DURABILITY

God's children are being restored for a reason.

Actions: Trusting, accepting the story of God, self, and others, knowing it is all being restored

- Accept there are broken parts of our story that still hurt, and simply sit with each other.
- Forgive yourself and others because God already did so. It is safe and right.
- Write your story of hurt to wholeness in Him.

Color

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose (ROMANS 8:28).

Be vulnerable, the most powerful form of connection

Resting in who we are with Christ allows us to become more honest about who we are with others.

This includes our past mistakes, weaknesses, strengths, gifts, and dreams for the future.

When we stop hiding behind who the world tells us we should be and start expressing our true self, we can give the purest part of us to others.

The more humble and vulnerable we are in conversations, the more likely we will penetrate the hearts and minds of those around us.

We will get the most joy from what we do and be the most effective in expressing God's love when we are real (raw).



PRESENT AS RAW

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose (ROMANS 8:28).

Step out in faith, share our real stories with each other

As you express yourself to others, it can be tempting to gloss over the parts you do not like or are ashamed of. Try not to just highlight the things you are good at.

Allow your past hurts and mistakes to be seen and offered as part of your story.

It is risky, you may lose something, but be courageous enough to illuminate your brokenness so that it can be a testimony of God's healing beauty in your life.

Color tends to settle and become brightest in our deepest cracks. The parts of our story that make us unique are exactly how God can use us to love differently in the world.deepest.



ADD COLOR – ILLUMINATE UNIQUENESS

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose (ROMANS 8:28).

Hear, see, & explore each other's heart

We are all cracked and colored differently on purpose. Our hurt-to-wholeness stories are meant to be explored as avenues of understanding and connecting with each other.

When we truly listen to someone as they tell their story, we are saying to them, "I care about you, what you've been through, and what you have to offer."

Pure beauty lies between the lines of how our faith has grown, how we have struggled, what we love and why.

Learning more about each other's story of restoration helps us to see past the outer shell and into the heart, where our purpose is colored the brightest.



PAUSE TO SEE BEAUTY IN EACH OTHERS VESSEL

God's love is revealed through us.

Actions: Expecting, exploring our evolving story, heart, and design with others

- Discover God and His fruits of the spirit in your broken story.
- Receive others' stories patiently, expecting to see evidence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.
- Explore how we are being changed through these experiences with God to love others.

Use

From Him the whole body, joined and held together . . . grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (EPHESIANS 4:16).

Help each other discover the gifts/light in our heart

Our lives embody evidence of “God with us” through expressions of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control.

If your story contains God’s love through abandonment, grief, pain, and/or suffering, this can be used to comfort those who are hurting.

Our past sin and shame can also be repurposed to humbly offer mercy and friendship.

The perseverance and wisdom we have gained over precious time spent with our Father can be invested in the well-being of others. We can employ the faith God built in us from our own walk to walk with others.

Recognizing God’s presence in our broken life story unveils our purest, most relevant gifts.



*FILL VESSELS WITH
WATER, DIRT, & SEED*

From Him the whole body, joined and held together . . . grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (EPHESIANS 4:16).

Offer and gather gifts from each one

Our individual gifts of the heart are sometimes buried deep within our story, yet as we patiently listen to each other, we will find these hidden treasures. When something is rare, it is hard to find, hard to replicate or replace.

No one can be left out of this discovering/offering process. Community is not complete until every person, every vessel is offering the seeds of their heart.

The work we do together to search for and employ these abilities will build hope and life-giving relationships.

Dirt will do nothing without the seed, the seed nothing without dirt, and dirt nothing without water. We were created to need what is in each heart to fully grow and bear fruit together.



POUR DIRT, SEED AND WATER
INTO OTHERS JARS

From Him the whole body, joined and held together . . . grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (EPHESIANS 4:16).

Restoring relationships is something beautiful

God created a beautiful earth for us out of emptiness and chaos. Because He lives in us, we embody this same power and purpose to create beauty from dirt and darkness.

God wants to form and repurpose our lives, to do something in a new way through our raw story.

We see and work with each other best by sharing our true cracks and colors with each other.

It will not be easy to reveal how God built our faith and refined us through the fire.

Yet these precious gifts buried deep in our hearts are meant to be planted and used to restore something beautiful on earth as it is in heaven . . . Just Relationships!



EVERY JAR IS FILLED - GROWING TOGETHER

God's family is made through relationships.

Actions: Planting, growing together by each one giving what's in our hearts.

- Help each other employ the most transforming parts of our story (what we care about the most).
- Learn and work together, knowing every heart bears fruit (God's love through us).
- Grow together in our understanding of God's love and share this love differently.

GOD MADE A WAY FROM DIRT TO SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL

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