BIG IDEA: Every person who leads or joins a group desires the group to be “deeper.” However, few people know what they mean when they say that phrase, “deeper.” I have found what they mean is, they want a group that is causing “life transformation.” We believe a “deep” Life Group is one that is transparent. As Christ followers, we are called to live in openness with one another for our own good and our own “life transformation.” However, being open and transparent with a group of people can be intimidating. The danger is, if we neglect to push past surface level relationships in our groups, we will rob ourselves of the gift of true Biblical community.

As the leader of the group, this practice starts with you.

1. **WHY DO WE PURSUE TRANSPARENCY?**
   
   A. **BRINGING THINGS INTO THE LIGHT** – *(Ephesians 5:11-14)* As difficult and uncomfortable as this is, we must be in the habit of letting Jesus shine light on the dark corners of our hearts. The alternative is allowing them fester and grow: resulting in more sin and heading down the wrong path.
   
   B. **NO ONE IS PERFECT** – *(Galatians 6:14)* We don’t have to pretend to have it all together. What a relief! In Life Groups, you and your group members can be open about your struggles because all of you have them. Model this and it will transform your group to become deeper in relationship and therefore discipleship.
   
   C. **BABY STEPS** – Start with sharing a time or two that day you failed to act Christlike, or perhaps share an area of growth spiritually. This will grow transparency within the group. Eventually, trust will be built and people will be able to come to one another with sin struggles that will help everyone follow Christ more dependently and experience His love more intentionally.

2. **HOW DO WE CONTINUALLY ACHIEVE TRANSPARENCY?**
   
   A. **PRAYER** – The world says that we have to keep our walls high to show that we have everything together. However, prayer works to tear those walls down, prepare us to share, and prepare us to listen.
   
   B. **BOLDNESS** – As the leader, you are in a position to set an example for the rest of your group. If you are willing to be vulnerable about the things in your life, then the rest of your group will grow to feel that they can be vulnerable as well. However, this requires you to take a bold first step into it and continually foster it. Through the Spirit, you are equipped and empowered to do just that. For encouragement, see Ephesians 4:8-16 and Hebrews 13:20-21
   
   C. **HONESTY** – A great launching point for practicing honesty is sharing with your group how biblical truths affect the state of your heart and behavior. When you feel conviction from scripture, open up a safe space to discuss it.
   
   D. **ENCOURAGEMENT** – Some good ways to encourage your group to continue growing in their transparency are:
      
      - Acknowledge that your personal vulnerability is difficult, but worth it.
      - If group members do start to open up, be sure to reinforce them and thank them for sharing.
      - Be on the lookout for the fruit in your personal life and the lives of your group members that reinforces that God does His work when we share our struggles and then share them with your group! Sometimes the fruit from hard decisions is hard to see in the moment – you can help encourage them by keeping an eye out for these things!

3. **REFLECT**
   
   A. As a leader, are there things that you are walking through right now that you think you should lay in front of your group so that they might know you and walk with you better?
   
   B. What steps can you take in your group time preparation to foster a safe environment conducive to members’ sharing?
   
   C. What practical steps can you take to encourage your group members? What fruit do you see in their lives that you can encourage and affirm them with?