

Day 4 - Session 1: Sticking Points & Barriers Between Chairs

Participant Handout

Session Theme

Jesus identified specific sticking points that keep people stuck in each chair and barriers between levels of fruitfulness - recognizing and overcoming them is essential to completing the disciple-making journey.

Scripture Focus

- Mark 4:1-20 (The Parable of the Soils - four types of ground)
- John 15:1-8 (The vine and the branches - four levels of fruit)
- 1 John 1:9 (Confessing sin for cleansing)
- Hebrews 12:5-11 (God's discipline as loving pruning)
- Psalm 91:1 (Dwelling in the shelter of the Most High)
- Colossians 1:28-29 (Strenuously contending with Christ's energy)

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the four sticking points from Mark 4 that keep people from becoming fruitful
 2. Explain the three barriers between chairs from John 15 (sin, good things/pruning, satisfaction)
 3. Diagnose where they or their disciples might be stuck and name one step to move forward
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Teaching Block 1: The Tacks on the Chair

Core Idea: Each chair has its own sticking points. The Parable of the Soils (Mark 4) shows that 75% of people who begin the journey never reach fruitfulness.

- **Four soils = four sticking points:**

Soil Type	What Happens	Sticking Point
Hard path	Birds snatch seed	Stuck in Chair 1 - needs cultivation
Rocky soil	Quick growth, no root	Stuck in Chair 2 - needs deep roots
Thorny soil	Worries, wealth, wants choke plant	Stuck in Chair 2-3 - needs thorn removal
Good soil	30, 60, 100 times harvest	Moving toward Chair 4

- **The farmer knows:** You cannot throw seed on unprepared ground. You must cultivate, deepen roots, and clear thorns. A Javanese farmer prepares the field before planting. We must prepare hearts before sharing the Gospel.

Scripture: "Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times." - Mark 4:8

Discussion Block 2: Three Sticking Points - Worries, Wealth, Wants

Three groups of 3-4, each takes one sticking point

1. (8 min) Group discussion:

- **Group A - Worries:** What worries choke fruitfulness in your context? What Scripture promises help?
- **Group B - Wealth:** How does the deceitfulness of wealth distract from disciple-making, even among the poor?

- **Group C - Wants:** What "good things" crowd out the best thing?

My group's practical step to overcome our sticking point:

2. (7 min) Report and discuss.

Teaching Block 3: Barriers Between the Chairs

Core Idea: John 15 maps four levels of fruit to the four chairs, with three barriers between them.

- **Four levels of fruit:**

Chair	Fruit Level	Key Verse
Chair 1 - The Lost	No fruit	John 15:5
Chair 2 - The Believer	Fruit	John 15:2
Chair 3 - The Worker	More fruit	John 15:2
Chair 4 - Disciple-Maker	Much fruit	John 15:8

- **Three barriers:**

Barrier	Between	What It Is	Remedy
1. SIN	Chair 1->2	Unconfessed sin. But airo = "lift up," not destroy	Confess immediately (1 John 1:9). Be a "repenter"
2. PRUNING	Chair 2->3	God removes good things for better things	Expect it. Guard against bitterness (Heb 12:15). Trust the Gardener

3. SATISFACTION	Chair 3- >4	Content with "more fruit" instead of "much fruit"	Abide (meno). Strenuously contend in His energy (Col 1:29)
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- **Pruning insight:** A vine branch with 10-12 buds is pruned back to 2-3 for richer fruit. The gardener is never closer than when pruning.
- **Abiding insight:** Meno appears 8 times in John 15. Make Jesus your permanent dwelling place (Ps 91:1).

Scripture: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit." - John 15:5

Discussion Block 4: Diagnosing Where We Are Stuck

Individual reflection (7 min), then pairs (8 min)

1. Draw the diagram:

Chair 1 ---[Sin]--- Chair 2 ---[Pruning]--- Chair 3 ---[Satisfaction]--- Chair 4

Place an "X" where you are. Answer: a. What is my sticking point? _____ b.
Which barrier am I facing? _____ c. One thing I need to do or trust God to do?

2. In pairs: share your diagnosis. Listen. Pray briefly.

Teaching Block 5: Overcoming the Barriers

Core Idea: Practical help for each barrier. God will not leave us stuck - but we must cooperate.

Barrier 1 - Sin:

- Confess immediately (1 John 1:9)

- Be a "repenter" - the Christian life is a life of repenting
- Let the Father lift you up - He restores, not discards

Barrier 2 - Pruning:

- Expect it (John 15:2 - "every branch")
- Do not let bitterness grow (Heb 12:15 - the #1 destroyer of disciples)
- Remember: good things removed for better things
- Do not shrink back (Heb 10:35)

Barrier 3 - Satisfaction:

- Abide (meno) - make Jesus your dwelling place
- Strenuously contend in His energy (Col 1:29)
- Never settle for "more fruit" - God wants "much fruit"
- Inspect your fruit: Character (Gal 5), Conduct (Phil 1:11), Converts (Rom 1:13)

Scripture: "Do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded." - Hebrews 10:35

Discussion Block 6: My Next Step - Breaking Through

Personal commitment (5 min), then whole group prayer (10 min)

My Commitment to Move Forward:

Question	My Answer
Which chair am I in?	Chair 1 / 2 / 3 / 4
My biggest sticking point? (worries / wealth / wants / other)	
Which barrier am I facing? (sin / pruning / satisfaction)	
ONE step I will take this week?	

Who will hold me accountable?	
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Prayer: We pray for each barrier - repentance for sin, endurance for pruning, holy dissatisfaction for satisfaction.

Application Handles

1. **When you feel stuck in your spiritual growth (not moving to the next chair),** use the Mark 4 soils to diagnose why. Ask: Is my heart hard (need cultivation)? Shallow (need deeper roots)? Choked by worries/wealth/wants (need to clear the thorns)? **Do not just try harder - diagnose first.**
2. **When you face painful circumstances that feel like God is taking good things away,** recognize this as pruning (John 15:2). God is removing good things to make room for greater fruitfulness. Guard your heart against bitterness - it is the number one destroyer of disciples. **Trust the Gardener; He is never closer than when He is pruning.**
3. **When you are busy and fruitful but have not trained anyone else to do what you do,** you may be stuck at the "satisfaction barrier" between Chair 3 and Chair 4. Remember that God's goal for you is not "more fruit" but "**much fruit**" (John 15:8) - and that requires reproduction. Find one person to invest in this week.

My Notes