

The Journey: 3 Simple Steps of a SPAR Meeting

Strong Beginning (5 minutes)

There are three ways to get off to a good start in the SPAR journey. Here they are:

- Starter Question: In the last few days, what has Jesus been doing in you and/or through you? OR Describe in detail the goodness of God in your life lately.
- Read out loud your written SPAR Declaration
- Read a portion of Scripture.
- Each person pray a simple, honest, childlike prayer.
- Ask someone to share a recent Jesus testimony.

It is important to get each person focused on God and each other. It is easy to begin the SPAR journey with a scattered mind or selfish focus. It only takes a few seconds to help someone shift their focus back to God.

1. Telling Our Stories.

Storytelling is the essence of relationship. We all have a story to tell. And we all crave a listening ear for our stories. This is also the essence of intimacy building. We all get to do both- disclosure and discovery- so that basic intimacy is established and continues to grow. Romans 12:15 tells us to “rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.” But we don’t stop there.

In SPAR, we tell our stories for a higher purpose than merely to connect deeply. We tell our stories in order to experience God. The powerful thing about our life in God is that our stories always intersect His story, the life-changing story of Jesus Christ.

In a SPAR meeting, we tell our stories so that we experience the truth of Luke 6:45: “Whatever is in the heart, the mouth speaks.” Our stories ALWAYS eventually reveal our heart. Because we are often blind to the

deep needs of our hearts, God has given us friends to travel with us in our spiritual journey. We have the privilege of helping each other see the reality of our hearts. Through sharpening one another (probing questions and speaking the truth in love), we help each other see clearly our need for God.

2. Revealing our Hearts.

In order to encounter our Father God, we must see our need for him. This can often be the most challenging part of SPAR as well as the most painful. Why? Pride. The fleshly, joyless desire to look good, be right, feel good, and be in control can be intense at times. We can be totally blind to the huge needs in our life simply because of pride.

The good news is that God works powerfully and miraculously through the double-edged sword of a SPAR meeting: the Holy Spirit and the Body of Jesus Christ. And because we are simple folks, there are only a handful of needs that we have as spiritual beings. We like to use the acronym FUSE to remember these 4 issues of the heart.

Fear: Although fear is simply an emotion, it will oftentimes lead us to the areas of our life where we struggle to trust God. Unbelief is always at the core of our struggles in life.

Unforgiveness: Matthew 18 declares that we will experience torment in our soul unless we “forgive from the heart.” Always have the forgiveness protocols in a SPAR meeting in order to lead others to freedom from unforgiveness.

Shame: Shame is the hidden monster in most of our lives. The majority of our pain comes from simply “believing lies about who we are.”

Expectations: All of us have a three-year old inside of us. My flesh shouts, “My life is all about me!” Our selfish demands and expectations of others always produce one result: a hard heart towards the people that we say we love.

These are the Big 4 issues of the heart. Once a person’s eyes are opened to the need of their heart, they will be hungry to cry out to Christ and His body for help.

This is where we get to experience what Romans 12 calls being “transformed by the renewing of our minds.”

3. Encountering our God.

This is the best part of SPAR. This step in the Journey is when we realize that we are powerless to fix lives or change our hearts. God must move on our behalf. This is where we end our storytelling and probing questions. We bow our heads, humble ourselves, confess our need, and ask God to speak. We trust that He will provide us with the faith to believe His truth. This always results in freedom.

So what does a God encounter look like in SPAR? Instead of praying for each other, we lead each other into an encounter with God through prayer. This can happen many ways. Here are 6 good prayers to help you get started.

- The prayer of surrender
- The prayer of gratitude
- The prayer of confession
- The prayers of forgiving others (gratitude, confession, declaration, blessing)
- The prayer of declaration
- The prayer of helplessness

God always wants to move in our hearts, speak His liberating truth, and do the next miracle for his children. Our only responsibility is to posture ourselves to receive.

Strong Ending (5 Minutes)

Congratulations! You have made it to the last step of SPAR journey. In order to finish strong you may want to:

- Pray a prayer of gratitude, worship, and praise.
- Give each person 1 minute to write down their take-a-way, and 30 seconds each to go around the circle and make a declaration.
- 60 seconds of silence followed by a one sentence prayer.

One more thing. Remember, the SPAR relationships are more important than the SPAR meeting. What happens in between meetings is more important than what happens in the meeting. Reach out to one of your SPAR buddies each and every day!