

Philosophy of Training

We want deep teaching and training that forms the minds of our people, *and* we want to experience depth of relationship with God and each other. As an example, this would look like taking the time to not merely teach the propositions that make up the doctrines of grace, but to also do the costly and time-consuming work of integrating the implications of those doctrines into the hearts and lives of our hearers in ways that will fend off the predictable arrogance and impatience that often come as a package deal with “cage-stage Calvinism,” and would instead increasingly produce the actual logical outflow of those doctrines—deep humility and deep joy!

Seeking to intentionally lead, teach, and form our people as whole persons, in holistic, integrated ways is not a fail-proof technique. We don’t always know when something will sink in or take root in someone’s heart, but we can continue to use all the means of grace as we engage our people as embodied souls and seek to put them in the “way of allurements,” in the language of the Puritans. We need to take the principles we long to communicate, and pull them out of the realm of intuition, and give our people explicit handles for putting them into practice. We need to put the rivet in between “big T” truth and the everyday stuff of their lives in ways that will turn on the lights for them.

MIND The realm of truth where we ask the question <i>what</i>. In leadership, at the institutional level of leading a local church, this encompasses creedal and confessional faith and healthy cultural analysis, with responses that are not reactive, but rather resilient, and rooted in confidence in God’s Word. Broadening out, it’s where we think about policy and content. When we are preparing to teach and train: we should aim to provide opportunities for our people to read, listen, study, reflect, and reason.	STRENGTH The realm of execution where we ask the question <i>how</i>. In leadership, at the institutional level of leading a local church, this is the realm of capacity. Capacity includes both hard and soft skills like calendaring, self-management, developing and implementing a strategic plan for your ministry, interacting with volunteers, and setting goals. When we are preparing to teach and train: we should aim to create opportunities for action. We want to do what we have learned, and we want to work to establish patterns and practices that reflect truth.
SOUL The realm of meaning where we ask the question <i>why</i>. It’s where we think about depth of character, vision-casting, metaphor, and the power of story. When we are preparing to teach and train: we should aim to provide opportunities for our people to integrate what they are learning—not merely parroting back ideas, but sitting with those ideas before the face of God, and doing deeper story work around their past hurts, as well as their present sins, wounds, and weaknesses.	HEART The realm of relationship where we ask the question <i>who</i>. In leadership, at the institutional level of leading a local church, we should be thinking about communion, chemistry, and compatibility. When we are preparing to teach and train: we should aim to create experiences of grace with God and with each other, where we flesh out what we’re learning.

