

Observations from the Good Soil E&D Scale

General Observations

- The processes of evangelism and discipleship (E&D) include both God's roles and ministry roles of believers—we might think of them as divine-human processes.
- The bottom half of the scale illustrates some key processes involved in evangelism and the top half illustrates some key processes involved in discipleship.
- The bottom half of the scale relates to *The Story of Hope* (TSOH) and the top half to *The Way to Joy* (TWTJ).
- The lowest steps on the scale (-12 up through -5) relate to the “understand” concepts in Matthew 13:23, the next four steps up the scale (-4 through -1) relate to the “embrace” concepts in Mark 4:20, and the top half of the scale (+1 through +12 and on up) to the “retain” concepts in Luke 8:15.
- Revelation, conviction, regeneration, and sanctification are divine roles—only God can make these happen.
- The recipient of the E&D ministries (an unbeliever in the E process and a believer in the D process) must respond positively to the influences he or she receives or progress up the scale will not occur.
- An unbeliever will not proceed up the scale if he or she is not aware of the need to do so and is not exposed to the appropriate spiritual truths.
- God's role and the believer's ministry role change on the basis of how the ministry recipient responds.
- The processes on this scale are not time-predictable, but are unique to each person.
- No matter where an individual is on the scale, there is always room for growth.
- As this process unfolds, the ministry recipient (at left) changes from a recipient to an influencer/minister.

Observations Related to Evangelism (E)

- There is a definite universal (for every human being) starting point in this overall process of spiritual responses—all are born with a God-Vacuum.
- As individuals respond positively to spiritual truths they move up the negative scale until they arrive at zero, the point of regeneration.
- God's revelation of truth to mankind and the conviction of the Holy Spirit start very early in the Human Response part of the scale.
- People are most vulnerable to false beliefs when they are at the "seeks to fill personal spiritual void" response level (note that the next step up is "vulnerable to false religious beliefs").
- There are three levels of evangelism—tilling evangelism, planting evangelism, and reaping evangelism.
- Reaping (genuine repentance and faith) only happens following a planting and tilling process.
- The ministry activities of a believer with an unbeliever at the lowest levels ("tilling") are evangelism activities. (not "pre-evangelism" as they are sometimes called).
- On this scale, there are seven tasks of the believer in the evangelism process.
- Persuasion, if properly done and correctly timed, is an appropriate responsibility of believers in the ministry of evangelism.
- A lot of understanding and information need to be in place prior to regeneration.
- Confronting an unbeliever with a faith response without sufficient understanding can lead to a false profession.
- In the bottom half of the scale, one might find some exceptions to the linear-logical order of the responses illustrated here.
- Regardless of the sequence, the substance (all points) of responses before regeneration must take place for a person to genuinely become a child of God.
- The gospel is more than a single truth, it involves multiples truths about God, man, sin, death, Christ, the cross*, faith, and life**.

*the redemptive work of Christ, including His resurrection

**concepts related to spiritual and eternal life

Observations Related to Discipleship (D)

- Regeneration (which occurs at the point of repentance and trusting Christ for salvation) is not the end goal of our ministries with people.
- There are three levels of discipleship indicated on this scale—follow up discipleship, equipping discipleship, and leadership development.
- The growth process after regeneration is not necessarily linear; believers move through these scale-steps in many varying sequences.
- Most everyone (if not everyone) can become a leader in some realm of spiritual-gifted ministry.
- In this life, there is no end to the sanctification process as long as a person is responding positively to God's influences in his or her life.