TRANSPARENCY – LDG

Transparency: easily seen through, recognized, or detected. Showing yourself as a real person with real problems. This is not full disclosure with all your dirty laundry hanging out. Instead, it is humility that allows us to admit we are not perfect.

The Apostle Paul was quick to admit his deficiencies. The church in Rome heard about his battle with coveting (Rom. 7:7-8). He told believers in Corinth that when he arrived in their city he was weak, fearful and trembling (1 Cor. 2:1-3). When he reached Macedonia he acknowledged outward conflict and inward fear (2 Cor. 7:5). While encouraging his mentee Timothy, he mentioned his sinful past as a blasphemer, persecutor, and violent aggressor. In one of his most vulnerable moments, he described a painful condition he was not able to overcome (2 Cor. 12:1-10). Paul saw himself as a fellow struggler and one who needed Christ's mercy the most (1 Tim. 1:13-16).

Transparency is often difficult for us. Dealing with sin is part of the spiritual growth process. Most of us are willing to admit we sin. But it's hard for some of us to admit *exactly how* we fail – to be specific. When we "hide" certain faults, and disclose only positive characteristics, people have a hard time relating to us. When we admit that we don't have it all together we are agreeing with what the Bible says: we are fallen people who need God's grace and mercy.

How comfortable are you sharing your failures as well as your triumphs? Can you discern why? Discuss appropriate and inappropriate vulnerability.

Describe a time when someone's life experience helped you understand an important truth.

Pair up and practice telling each other about a difficult time when God worked in your life (i.e. fear, depression, anxiety, discouragement, pride, jealousy, doubt, failure or restoration). Include your honest thoughts, feelings, and responses and how God seemed present or seemed absent. Set a time limit so each person has the same amount of time to share.
End in prayer

(adapted from *Organic Mentoring*)