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**Red Letter Day**

**Facilitator’s Notes**

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**RED LETTER DAY F.A.Qs**

**FOR FACILITATORS**

**What date will Red Letter Day be this year?**

Each individual cohort will decide the date of Red Letter Day. Because we want 100% attendance on Red Letter Day, each facilitator needs to tell the members of his cohort that this is one of only a very few mandatory sessions and let them determine a date together when they all can be present.

**When should we schedule Red Letter Day?**

We would suggest that if at all possible, schedule **Red Letter Day** after you have facilitated the lesson *The Foundation of Friendship* by Craig Groeschel in the Friends & Fitness Module.

**How should we contact each member’s spouse?**

Below is a F.A.Q. sheet that we ask that you send to each member’s spouse. This F.A.Q. sheet should answer most of the questions a spouse will have concerning Red Letter Day.

**Planning for Red Letter Day**

Remember, you have to plan for Red Letter Day in advance. It takes time for the spouses to contact the special people in the men’s lives, for the people to respond to the plea for a letter or email, and time for you to organize the materials for the special day. You cannot allow too much time in preparation for Red Letter Day but you can allow too little time!

**What kind of special teaching session should we have on Red Letter Day?**

We have provided a script below for the Red Letter Day session which includes a PowerPoint presentation and videos. This session will require some additional work to create the suggested PowerPoint slides and locate the suggested videos to be played but we believe the extra effort will be worth it as it adds to the overall powerful effect of Red Letter Day.

**The** “**Simplify**” **framed picture**

You will need to provide each member of your cohort their own “simplify” plaque. You will share with your cohort an explanation of the message of this serene photo in the teaching script. You can find the “Simplify” picture in the Red Letter Day folder on the MD5 website. Save the picture to a flash drive and take it to Walmart to print the number of pictures that you need for your cohort and to also buy an inexpensive frame to put the picture in. Please remember to do this several weeks in advance of Red Letter Day.

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**RED LETTER DAY F.A.Qs**

**FOR SPOUSES**

**A Sample of what might be said to the wives of cohort members concerning Red Letter Day**:

We are enjoying having your husband as a part of our men's discipleship! We want to do something special for him, and we need your help. We would like to surprise him with a note or letter of encouragement from you, your children, his parents and parents- in- law, siblings, close friends, co- workers, or from anyone you feel would be a blessing to him. In the note or letter, please share with him how he has blessed you, what he means to you, how you appreciate him, etc.

We need to receive these letters back from you by (insert month and day of the month). Once we receive a package for each individual, we will then carry out the special day on (*date*).

Please give us your e-mail and we will send you a FAQ sheet and contact information for us to obtain the letters from you.

From our past experience, this effort will mean the world to your husband and will be a day he will never forget. Thank you in advance for helping us make this day special for him.

After you receive the wife’s e-mail address, send the FAQ sheet below to her. If you have not heard back from the wife in three weeks, please contact her again to encourage her to complete the assignment.

**Is Red Letter Day Really a Surprise?**

Yes! The men know nothing about it so please keep it a secret. It will be worth it to see their reaction, we promise!

**How many letters should I collect?**

In previous groups, some men have had less than 5 and some have had more than 30. Go for quality over quantity. The average seems to be around 10.

**Does it need to be a letter?**

No. We’ve heard of everything from cards and notes to printed emails. We have even seen books that had a note written in the front cover.

**Can you give me some idea on the content contained in the letters?**

Anything that will be positive and encouraging for the man receiving the packet. There is no right or wrong concerning the content.

**Do the facilitators read the letters before giving them to my loved one?**

No. The letters will remain private and will be put into a matching packet that all MD5 participants will receive on Red Letter Day.

**Will the letters be read aloud on Red Letter Day?**

No. Only your loved one will know the content of their letters, who wrote them, and the number of letters that they receive.

**Who can write a letter?**

Absolutely anyone. Men, women, and even children. We’ve even heard of a few pets writing letters to their owners with the help of another human! **Please try to think of the people that have been impactful in their lives**.Below is a small list of potential writers:

* Wives, children, siblings, parents, relatives, and in-laws.
* Old friends, college roommates, old teammates, and co-workers.
* Bosses, mentors, or people they have looked up to in the past.

**What date will Red Letter Day be this year?**

Each individual cohort will decide the date of Red Letter Day. Spouses, please do **not** ask your loved one when Red Letter Day will be! They won’t know what you’re talking about and it could ruin the surprise!

**Who should I give my letters to once I’ve collected them?**

The facilitators of your husband’s cohort will give you a due date for the materials to be collected and submitted. Please take note of this due date. If you receive other letters after the submission date, give them to your spouse AFTER they have experienced Red Letter Day.

You can mail the letter or drop the letters off at one of the facilitator’s homes.

Name of facilitator, address, email address, & phone number

Name of facilitator, address, email address, & phone number

Please do **not** try and give the Red Letter Day letters to your husband’s facilitator at church. Your spouse may see you do it and ask questions.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact one of the facilitators.

(Names of facilitators and contact information)

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**Red Letter Day Script**

**PPT Slide – MD5 Introduction**

The date was December 30, 1986. The Boston Celtics were playing the Seattle Supersonics in a regular season NBA basketball game in Seattle. The game was tied 102-102 and the Celtics had the ball. With 13 seconds left in the game, the Celtics called time out to discuss a play for the final shot of the game. Celtic coach K.C. Jones was giving the team instructions on what to do on the final play of the game when Celtic superstar Larry Bird spoke up and said, “Coach, just give me the ball and tell everyone to get out of the way.” Jones instructed his team to pass the ball to Larry and the Celtics broke the huddle.

As Larry Bird was walking back onto the court, he passed Supersonic player Xavier “the X-Man” McDaniel who would be guarding him. Larry said to Xavier, “I’m going to get the ball, and I am going to shoot it from right over there, and we are going to win the game.” Xavier replied, “I know and I’m going to be waiting.”

The Celtics inbounded the ball, and with 5 seconds left in the game, Larry Bird is passed the ball, takes one step back, and shoots the ball over the outstretched arms of two Supersonic players. With 2 seconds left in the game, the ball goes into the basket touching nothing but net! Larry then boasted to Xavier, “I told you that I was gonna shoot it right in your face but I didn’t intend to leave two seconds on the clock!” The Supersonics then inbounded the ball but lost the game to the Celtics 104-102.

Today, just like Larry Bird, we are going to tell you what we are going to do and then do it. Our goal is to encourage you, inspire you, challenge you, and maybe even rock your world a little. This morning, we will issue four “charges” to you praying that they will aid in your transformation to becoming a disciple of the Lord.

**PPT Slide – The First Charge is to** “**Simplify**” **Your Life**

Two words will define our time together for this hour—the **first word** is “simplify.” You have a plaque in front of you with a picture of a log cabin in the woods, setting on a serene lake, and a one-word caption—”Simplify.” Our intention is that you take this plaque with you and place it where you will see it regularly as a reminder that one of the major goals of MD5 is to “simplify” your lives in order to be like Jesus and focus on what is really important in life.

Jesus was the master of the spiritual discipline of “simplification.” Examine the life of Jesus, and you will discover that he was **not** focused on the things of this world. Jesus himself declared, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” (Mt. 8:20 ESV) Jesus, the perfect example in all things (1 Pet. 2:21), “simplified” his life to focus on the things that mattered most.

It has been said that that life is like a dot on the timeline of eternity and we either live for the dot, that little speck, or we live for the timeline. Jesus lived for the timeline—he came with an eternal mindset and so it should be with us. Our desire is to help you “simplify” your life so that you too can live with an eternal mindset.

**PPT Slide – The Second Charge is to** “**Reflect**” **Upon Your Life**

While the first word that will define our time together this morning is “simplify,” the **second** **word** is “reflect.” As men, we are not particularly good at “reflecting” upon our lives. When you stand in front of a mirror, you see your own reflection. A mirror provides an opportunity to assess the way you look and then you can make the necessary changes based upon what you have seen. In MD5, we are providing you with opportunities to “reflect” upon your life and then make mid-course corrections based upon what you see.

Max DePree famously said, “The first responsibility of leadership is to define reality ...” To “define reality” we must ask ourselves the question, “Where am I right now?” On several previous occasions, we have quoted Socrates who said: “The unexamined life is not worth living.”

So today, we want you to define “reality” by “examining” your lives, where you are right now, and then follow the admonition of the prophet Haggai who repeatedly called upon God’s people to “consider your ways.” (Hag. 1:5,7) We are asking you to “consider your ways” for the purpose of determining if they align both with the word of God and God’s will for your life.

And as you “reflect” upon your life, there are several guiding questions that are helpful in this process. **One** of those questions is, “When you get where you're going, where will you be?” A **second** question is, “When you accomplish the goals of your life, what will you have?”

**PPT Slide – Movie City Slickers**

A relevant question to our discussion is asked in the movie *City Slickers*. In this movie, actor Jack Palance plays the part of the aged cowboy Curly, and actor Billy Crystal plays the part of Mitch—a city slicker who is spending two weeks on a dude ranch to “reflect” upon his life and unwind. In one scene of the movie, Curly poses a very poignant question to Mitch that applies equally to all of us as we are all at this time in the process of assessing our own lives.

**Video Clip – “One Thing” From the Movie *City Slickers***

YouTube video — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1cmvzRKCCg>

In the movie City Slickers:

Curly asks Mitch, “Do you know what the secret to life is?” Then he holds up one finger, looks at it, and says, “This.” Mitch responds, “Your finger?” Curly shakes his head no and then replies, “One thing. Just one thing. You stick to that and the rest don’t mean anything.”

Giving Curly his full attention, Mitch asks, “That’s great, but what is the ‘one thing’?” Then, Curly smiles and answers, “That’s what you have to find out.”

A **third** important question that you need to ask yourself this morning is, “What is the secret to life?” According to Curly, the secret to life is to discover what the “one thing” is and “stick to that.”

**PPT Slide – The Top 5% Mindset**

During the MD5 orientation, we talked about the 5% mindset. We told you that 85% of what we do each day, we could delegate to somebody else and life would continue without missing a beat. We also said that 10% of what we do each day, we could train someone else to do in two or three days and life would continue without missing a beat. However, there is 5% of what you do that only **you** can do. That 5% is the “one thing” that Curley was talking about—the most important thing.

In MD5, we have outlined the 5% that only you can do as the 5 “Fs”—Faith, Family, Friends, Fitness, and Finance. **Faith**. Only you can have a personal relationship with Christ—no one else can do that for you. Only you can live out the gospel in such a way that others want what you have. **Family**. Only you can be the husband that loves his wife extravagantly, just as Christ loved the church. Only you can be a loving father, loving grandfather, a special son, or a faithful brother. **Friends**. Only you can build a bond of friendship that will lovingly guide others closer to the Savior. **Finances**. Only you can live a debt free life of discipline and control over your finances that affords your family a selfless spirit of giving. **Fitness**. Only you can discipline your body, what you put in your mouth and in your mind, in order to provide the energy to share your life in Christ with others.

These 5 “Fs” are the 5% that only you can do. The challenge of the 5 “Fs” is “intentionality.” To “seize the day” intentionally living it for the glory of God and the benefit of others.

**PPT Slide – Psalm 90:12**

Because none of us know how many days we have left in our lives, Moses exhorted us with these words, “So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.” (Ps. 90:12 ESV) Simply put, Moses challenged believers to consider the individual days of our lives—each one as an opportunity to live a life that is honoring to our Lord. Today, the average American man lives to be a little over 76 years old. This is just an average. Some will live longer than that—others of us will not. Let us show you what this would look like for the men in our cohort:

**PPT Slides – The Tombstones**

**PPT slides of the tombstones of the individual members of your cohort with the date of their birth and the date of their death if they lived 76 years**.

**PPT Slide – The Dash**

**Video Clip – “The Dash”**

“The Dash Poem – Live Your Dash – The Dash Movie” (3:00)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuA-SLNeEpw>

The **first** **charge** we present to you this morning is to “reflect” upon your **life**.

**PPT Slide – The Second Charge is to Reflect upon Your Faith**

As we continue to think about the top 5% of the things that only you can do in life, the **second charge** we want to issue to you today is to “reflect” on your **faith**. C.S. Lewis once said, “Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance, the only thing it cannot be is moderately important.” So, as you “reflect” upon your “faith” this morning, may you declare in every area of your life that Jesus is of “infinite” importance.

Perhaps the most famous verse in the Bible is John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (KJV) The Greek word *agapao* (*ag-ap-ah-o*) is translated into English as “loved” in John 3:16 and refers to God's unconditional love for mankind which Jesus demonstrated by dying on the cross both for us and in our place. (1 Jn. 3:16)

The word “excruciating,” which literally means, “out of the cross,” was coined to describe the pain Jesus endured on the cross for us. So, as you “reflect” upon your faith today, we remind you that Jesus demonstrated his immense love for you when he suffered on the cross for your sins in order to purchase your salvation. This suffering was vividly captured in the movie the *Passion of the Cross*.

**Video Clip – The Crucifixion Scene From the *Passion of the Christ***

The Passion of the Christ Worthy is the Lamb (4:20) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyAo9WMIiAk>

This video is difficult to watch but keep in mind that it only represents what Jesus suffered in the flesh at the hands of men. It does **not** portray what Jesus suffered during the last three hours on the cross, when he suffered at the hands of Almighty God—paying the sin debt of mankind!

Our **second charge** to you this morning is to “simplify” your life so that you can focus on your **faith**—your obedience to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. It is only as we keep the first and Great Commandment to “… love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Mt. 22:37) that we can fully keep the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20)—to make disciples of all nations. A disciple of Jesus is one who follows Jesus, who is being changed by Jesus, and who is engaged in the mission of Jesus.

The **second** **charge** today is to “reflect” upon your **faith**.

**PPT Slide – The Third Charge is to Reflect upon Your Wife**

As we continue to think about the top 5% of the things that only you can do in life, the **third charge** we issue to you this morning is to “reflect” upon your life’s partner and soul mate—your **wife**. Solomon asked this question, “An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.” (Prov. 31:10) Other than your personal salvation, a godly wife is your greatest possession! She is worth more than anything else this world has to offer! We should love our wives biblically, sacrificially, and extravagantly because she is worth it! (Eph. 5:25-29)

For just a moment, “reflect” upon your relationship with your wife. Now, consider each of these two men in this video and decide which one best describes your relationship with your wife.

**Video – “The Passing”**

 “The Passing – An Inspirational Award-Winning Short Film (5:01) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pg_1Pn9YcKg>

It is unfortunate that sometimes we do **not** realize what we have until it is gone. We hope that you will “reflect” upon the value of your wife and then “simplify” your life to have extra time to invest in your relationship with her.

The **third charge** is to “reflect” upon your **wife**.

**PPT Slide – The Fourth Charge is to Reflect upon Your Children**

As we continue to think about the top 5% of the things that only you can do in life, the **fourth** and final **charge** we issue to you this morning concerns your relationship with your **children**. The scriptures teach that children are a “heritage” of the Lord (Ps. 127:3) and “Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!” (Ps. 127:5 ESV)

According to the scriptures, there is no greater responsibility than making disciples in our homes. Paul admonished fathers with these words, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline [the root word is “disciple”] and instruction of the Lord.” (Eph. 6:4) Dads, God holds us, and only us, responsible to “disciple” our children. We must “simplify” our lives enough so that we can also spend more time with our children. It has oft been said that children spell “love” as “TIME.” You will never hear a child talk about “quality” time—only adults do that. Children need a “quantity” of our time! Simply put, as fathers, we need to always “be there” for our children!

In the following video, we will see a vast difference between the way a father viewed a day in his life and the way that his son viewed the same day.

**Video – “Fishing With Dad”**

“To a Child – Love is spelled T-I-M-E: A Short Inspirational Film (4:24) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfZhReSOP9w&t=74s>

It is so easy for us to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of life that we forget what is really important. Sometimes Satan, who cannot tempt us to do “bad” things, gets us “distracted” so that we spend so much time doing “good” things in life that we neglect the “best” things. Do not let this happen to you!

**PPT Slides – Pictures of the Members of Your Cohort With Their Families**

Men, you all have wonderful families. Take a good look at your family when they appear on the screen. Your family is a gift from God and they should be valued as such.

The **fourth charge** is to “reflect” upon your life in order to make disciples of your **children**.

**Conclusion**

We shared with you at the outset that our goal today was to encourage, inspire, challenge, and perhaps to even rock your world as we endeavor to support you in the transformation process of becoming the man that God would have you to be. For this to become a reality, it must begin with “simplifying” your life and focusing on the top “5%” that only you can do—your personal walk with God, your relationship with your wife and children, your relationship with those whom you call “friends,” your mental and physical fitness, and the freedom of a debt-free life. How are you doing on the top 5%? Your homework is to leave this room this morning and develop a plan for “simplifying” your life so that you can focus on the top 5%.

In just a moment, you will be handed a packet of materials. We ask that you do **not** open it until you are instructed to do so.

At the end of his life, the apostle Paul wrote these famous words: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.” (2 Tim. 4:7 ESV)

At the end of this life, we are all going to stand face-to-face with Jesus, look him eye-to-eye, and give an account for the lives that we lived on earth. There is no doubt that every man in this room desires that Jesus say to them, “Well done,thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” (Mt. 25:21 KJV)

So, if we could experience **today**, what it might be like on **that day**, do you think that it would make an impact on our lives? We do. So, this morning, we will attempt to give you a small taste of what it might be like on **that day** as the result of a life well lived for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before you open the packets you have been given, we ask that what we have shared with you today, and what you are about to experience when you open your packets, **not** be shared with anyone else. This is something unique to MD5 and we want the men who enter the program at a later date to have the same special experience that you are about to have.

We encourage you to read the materials in your packets and after you finish your packet, you are free to leave but you if you desire to stay and “reflect” upon what is in your packet, then feel free to do that also. You may now open the packet you have been given.

Play instrumental Christian music in the background for the rest of the session as the men open their packets.