

Background - Vox's Values

<Provide some context on why we're talking about Vox's Values.>

We are in the middle of a sermon series exploring the values of Vox. These values are meant to describe who we are in this season and who we hope to be as a community and individuals. They have risen to the surface over the course of our journey as a church. It is from these values of who we are, that should shape what we do and how we live. Vox's values include: Artistry, Posture, Empathy, Participation, Peculiarity and Mystery.

Posture: Session 2 Objectives

Send out the link to the sermon podcast to your group ahead of time so everyone can get a chance to listen to the sermon on Artistry.

- <http://voxveniae.com/posture/>

These objectives might be helpful in shaping and guiding the discussion to a healthy landing spot by the end of the night.

- Discussing what Posture means in relation to Vox and why it would be valuable to our community
- Identifying where we see Posture in our own lives and community.
- Finding examples of what Posture *is* and what posture *isn't*.
- Discussing what scripture says about Posture.
- Identifying spiritual practices based on Posture

Value of Posture

Introduce the value statement of Posture and if it's helpful for your group, reflect on the Scripture passage in Philippians 2.

Read the value statement for Posture to the group.

Posture. God gives grace to the humble. And a posture of humility emerges as we receive grace in community. Jesus, though equal with God, emptied himself of power and made himself human. We are called to a deep acceptance of this messy humanity, both ours and others, just as Jesus practiced. We have God's DNA yet live within our shadow, ashamed to live the fullness of God's vision for our lives. Humility is choosing to see ourselves and others more accurately – both our light and darkness. Each person has profound intrinsic worth and carries God's spark. We will work to consider others in addition to ourselves – recognizing that caring only for ourselves is just as damaging as neglecting ourselves which leads to another form of self-centered living.

Read/Reflect on Philippians 2:1-11

1 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Reflection on Posture

Spend some time reflecting the value of Posture. This can be a time to reflect on the value statement, the Scripture passage and the sermon podcast.

1. How does the value of Posture connect or not connect with you?
2. How have you experienced or seen this value demonstrated in the Vox community? If not, where have you experience it?
3. Was there anything that stood out for you in the sermon?

Humility: The Process of Becoming More Human

Philippians talks about Jesus emptying himself and perhaps there is something to be learned about Humility in this. Jason mentioned his Sermon that, "Humility emerges from a Non-Dualistic thinking." Then he quoted Richard Rohr, who said:

"We are not human beings on a journey toward Spirit, we are already spiritual beings on a journey toward becoming fully human, which for some reason seems harder precisely because it is so ordinary." -- Rohr

Perhaps there is a connection between Jesus emptying himself and our value of Posture.

4. What did Jesus empty himself of and what can we learn about humility and our own posture from this?

Dualistic vs Non-Dualistic

In contemporary culture, dualistic thinking has been seen as valuable as it is often associated with reason and logical scientific thought. In contrast, a non-dualist approach is often associated with spirituality and viewed as an opponent of scientific logic and reason, but this has not always been the case. We are starting to realize the potential damage to our spiritual life that could come from a strict dualistic paradigm.

Dualism tends to force us to pass judgements. Things are either good or bad. This brings us back to the Garden of Eden where we continually eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Perhaps this is where humility is vital and perhaps this is where we begin to understand what it means when Philippians says that Jesus *Emptied himself*.

EXERCISE: Humility and your Enneagram type.

5. What does Humility look like for each Enneagram type, and what are some areas where each type is prone to dualistic thinking?

Humility looks different for each enneagram type. (Examples: For two's this is usually their default perspective to put others above themselves, even at the expense of themselves. For nine's it might be natural to put other's opinions above their own, but is that true humility if we they don't value their own?)

Extra Non-Dualistic Discussion:

Matthew 9:9-13 - "I desire Mercy not Sacrifice." Jesus is quoting Hosea here, and he places Mercy and Sacrifice in paradoxical opposition to each other. Often we see our role as sacrificial and we focus more on what we can offer (our sacrifice) than our humanity.

Perhaps humility is letting go of our sacrifice.

6. Where do you see the sacrificial system still at play in your life and community? What would it look like to shun sacrifice and replace it with mercy?

Practice (Application)

Spend the remaining time reflecting on personal practice and what it means to live and interact with a posture of humility.

7. What is an area or opportunity where you can practice and express the value of Posture (humility)? (How does your Enneagram type impact your ability to practice Posture?)

8. In what ways can Vox continue to foster and facilitate this value?

Prayer

Close your time in prayer for any reflections that came from this time of dialogue and also allow space for any personal areas that require care.

Appendix - Other Resources

Vox Sermon Podcast

- Vox Podcast - Values: Posture (Jason Minnix)
 - <http://voxveniae.com/posture/>
- Sermon Notes
 - Intro
 - When a community feels safe, our stuff starts coming out, but it gets messy and we become threatened by other people's stuff
 - 1. Humility emerges with non-dualistic thinking.
 - Dualism (either/or) vs Non-dualism (both/and)
 - In our vulnerability, we are tempted to judge
 - Non dualism - resist the temptation to go binary
 - How might we have a skewed vision of ourselves?
 - inflated or deflated sense of self esteem
 - If your tendency is to already to always put others first, this would be damaging and prideful
 - Spiritual Practice
 - How could we practice non dualistic thinking of Jesus 5 minutes a day?
 - 2. Humility is the process of becoming more human.
 - "We are not human beings on a journey toward Spirit, we are already spiritual beings on a journey toward becoming fully human, which for some reason seems harder precisely because it is so ordinary." -- Rohr
 - What did Jesus empty himself of?
 - divine power - to place trust in the Father
 - live in a deep trust (soothe the part that protects ourselves)
 - Spiritual practices of soothing our ego
 - 1. Acknowledge and thank our ego for carrying us through difficult times before and now.
 - 2. Practice deep acceptance of ego when it flares up.
 - 3. Invite God to collaborate with you in small ways moving forward.
 - 3. Humility leads us to simple faithfulness.
 - What's unique about Jesus' path?
 - Jesus work was to end all systems of sacrifice
 - What's imitative and what's transferable?
 - Our work is not to live out of sacrifice
 - no need to build messiah complex
 - What is the level of our community we should reach for?
 - The vulnerability to engage our demons together

- Reflection Questions
 - Where am I being invited to a deeper acceptance of my messy and loved humanity?
 - How can I trust Jesus to teach me how to carry my life and calling with simple faithfulness this week?

Optional Exercises/Activities

- Spiritual Practices:
 - In Jason's sermon, he left us with some spiritual practices regarding posture and humility:
 1. Acknowledge and thank our ego for carrying us through difficult times before and now.
 2. Practice deep acceptance of ego when it flares up.
 3. Invite God to collaborate with you in small ways moving forward.
- Discuss Dualism vs. Non-dualism

• Dualism(either/or)	Non-dualism (both/and)
• Good / bad	Light and darkness
• Safe / unsafe	Safe /sometimes unsafe
• True / untrue	80 / 20 rule
• Belong/excluded	Story of both
• Authentic / Fake	Discernment, blind spots
• Love / Hate	Acceptance: we feel both
• Stupid / smart	Wisdom - lived knowing
• Beautiful / ugly	Learning to love all
• Us / Them	That could be me . . .
• Spiritual / Secular	God's artistry is ever present
• OK / Not OK	Just a person on a journey