

VIRUS ALERT: SEGMENTITIS

“ESSENTIALLY, JESUS PROPOSED NOT ONLY A TEAM MINDSET, BUT A LEAGUE MINDSET.”

You can't get it from downloading a bad file. It doesn't creep in from an infected disk. Yet these viruses exist invisibly, silently sabotaging the “hard drive” of our discipling efforts. Yes, undermining many potentially effective strategies and approaches are two common outreach “viruses” that can limit the scope and impact of any discipling effort.

Virus #2: Segmentitis

It is unfortunate that we've seen such a sharp and distinct dichotomy between the words evangelism and discipleship. The two are married, not divorced. And together they form the one goal we're pursuing: Making disciples. Splitting them leaves us heavy on one end, the state of most youth groups and ministries. We should look at *both* as imperative, the two necessary components of a discipling group.

Sure, some are better at one than the other. These people are called specialists. And while specializing in one area can prove productive if we keep an eye towards the entire process, it can also breed the beginnings of Segmentitis, which ultimately leaves us dysfunctional. Too often, we unknowingly separate the various elements of discipling into such categorized units that none work together. Instead of various parts making up the whole, we have many “wholes” trying to do their “part.”

In John 4, when Jesus insightfully corrected the disciples about their false view of sowing, watering, and reaping, He clearly pointed out, though all the elements are crucial, “*being glad together*” regarding the harvest was most important. He refused to allow His followers to segment and prioritize their roles. Essentially, Jesus proposed not only a team mindset, but a league mindset. Making disciples requires more than one's own unique ability (player) and extends beyond our own community (team). It involves the input of people from the past, present, and future (league) who humbly do their part with a “big picture” mindset.

Most often, Segmentitis occurs in post-event connection. Because typical event planners and leaders spend the bulk of their time on things prior to and during the event, we mentally begin to view the event as the closing ceremony to weeks of work. In reality, the event is the opening ceremony, an orientation to a potential relationship with God that lasts a lifetime. Yet, many close up the file just at this critical point and tuck it away for future reference. “*It's over,*” we say. “*On to the next one.*” We've been infected by Segmentitis.

Here are some reflective questions to help you diagnose segmentitis in your group.

Segmentitis

- What are the most common words used to describe outreach in your ministry? Do any of these words unknowingly give greater attention to a segment of discipling, or are they indicative of the entire mission? How can you begin to define and teach a more accurate concept of Matthew 28:19-20?
- Think about your next outreach effort. Evaluate where you're spending the majority of your preparation time. Is it balanced between all aspects of the discipling process? If you're looking to simply “pull it off,” what does that tell you about how you view this biblical process?

- If you see you're a specialist in an area, does this negatively flavor the tendencies of your group? What can you do to compensate for your weak areas without shadowing your strengths?