

Holiness is not trying to look good on the outside while ignoring the internals (thoughts/desires) but letting His light in the dark corners of our lives.

PERSONAL HOLINESS 1 of 6 | TIER 2 DISCIPLESHIP | Matthew 15:7-9, 18-19; John 3:19-21

OCTOBER 13, 2019

DISCUSSION GUIDE :: AT A GLANCE



INFORMAL: (8 minutes)

Take attendance with the LEAD App.

Ask guests to complete a connection card.

Allow for informal conversation with your group but be prepped to transition. This would be a good time to remind them about the \$500 goal and ask for donations/encourage sacrifice.



INTRODUCTION: (7 minutes)

OPENING QUESTION: RHETORICAL!!! Are there sin struggles/temptations in your life that no one else knows?

ADDITIONAL QUESTION: PLEASE DISCUSS! Why are we tempted to ignore the seriousness of certain sin struggles in our lives and intentionally hide them?

PRAY: Ask the Holy Spirit to open our hearts to desire, see, understand, & live the truth.

EXPLAIN: Pastor Owen will be preaching this same passage in the worship service.

READ: Matt 15:7-9, 18-19 out loud, give some background, & then begin the DIG Method.



DISCOVER - Asking Who, What, Where, or When (4 min)

WHO was Jesus calling hypocrites?

WHAT is the main problem Jesus is addressing?



INVESTIGATE - Asking Why or How (5 min)

WHY would this issue be important to Jesus?

Can someone wrestle with sin/temptation & yet not be considered a hypocrite? HOW?



GO - Asking Questions That Require Action (6 min)

What do I learn about GOD'S CHARACTER and how does this CHANGE my thoughts/actions?

What ERROR are we to avoid?



ACTIVITY: Individual Reflection (5 min)

EVALUATE how you are perceived by others compared to who you really are when no one is looking. Use the MASK Handout to work through these issues honestly. READ John 3:19-21.

THINK: What darkness in me needs to be exposed by the light? What things hidden need to be revealed. PRAY: Spend a few moments asking God in His mercy to help you with these needs.



COMMUNITY & CONCLUSION (10 min)

EXPLAIN: Hypocrisy dies with confession and vulnerability.

CLOSING QUESTIONS: Related to this morning's DIG study & the activity... How can we pray/encourage you this week? How can we hold you accountable this week?

Provided Supplies

The Mask Handout, Pens



Sermon Connection

Owen will be walking through the parallel passage in Matt 15:1-20.



Emmaus Connection

When our discussions connect to the life of the church we will include that here.

DISCUSSION GUIDE :: EXPANDED

INFORMAL: (8 minutes)

Take ATTENDANCE with the LEAD App.

Ask GUESTS to complete a CONNECTION card. Find ways to learn about the guest.

Allow for informal CONVERSATION but be prepped to TRANSITION to allow time for Bible discussion & community. This would be a good time to remind them about the \$500 goal and ask for donations/encourage sacrifice.

INTRODUCTION: (7 minutes)

OPENING QUESTION: RHETORICAL QUESTION!!! Are there sin struggles/temptations in your life that no one else knows?

- This will be a very vulnerable question. We in no way want students to confess their private struggles at this moment in your small group. However it might be worthy to ask students to affirm or deny the answer to this question. And what about you as their leader? Can you affirm this in front of your group. Again the goal is not to confess the "hidden struggle" but to admit whether we have struggles we have never shared or revealed to others. Not to be repetitive, but be willing to consider that everyone in the group can affirm this and maybe you could as well. We want today's interactions to encourage them (and you) find ways to let light into the darkness. .*

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS: PLEASE DISCUSS!!! Why are we tempted to ignore the seriousness of certain sin struggles in our lives and intentionally hide them?

- We fear rejection. We think we are the only ones who struggle or at least the only ones who struggle in this way. We think we are fine spiritually if we at least keep everything on the outside looking good. We do not realize how destructive neglected sin can be.*

PRAY: Ask the Holy Spirit to open our hearts to desire the truth, see the truth, understand the truth, and live the truth.

- We never want to approach God's Word like we approach books we read for school/learning. We are not merely acquiring information. We are encountering words that are alive and change people through the power of the Holy Spirit. Let's position ourselves in humility and ask God for His help and to transform us!)*

EXPLAIN: Pastor Owen will be preaching from the same passage we will discuss today.

- We have the privilege to get a preview of Pastor Owen's sermon today. Refuse to see this as needless repetition but as a means to help receive the full help of God's Word.*

READ: Matthew 15:7-9,18-19 out loud, give some background & then begin the DIG Method.

- Matthew 15:7-9,18-19** **7** You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: **8** "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; **9** in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." // **18** But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. // **19** For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander."
- Background:** These verses are taken from an event where the Pharisees & Scribes (the very religious of Jesus' day) were challenging Jesus' spiritual practice of not living according to their "manmade commands and traditions" (extra laws they kept to help them feel more religious and holy). Jesus responds to their challenge with a challenge of his own. Why were they putting more focus on their own rules and laws while also ignoring the commands of God. Jesus used the message of Isaiah, spoken hundreds of years ago, to condemn their actions and attitudes.



DISCOVER - Asking Who, What, Where, or When (4 min)

WHO was Jesus calling hypocrites? (refer to Matt 15:1)

- *The Pharisees & Scribes (the very religious of Jesus day).*

WHAT is the main problem Jesus is addressing?

- *Hypocrisy: Trying to honor God by what people see on the outside but ignoring the weightier issues of the mind and the heart. In other words, they were trying to present a different version of who they really were.*



INVESTIGATE - Asking Why or How (4 min)

WHY would this issue be important to Jesus?

- *To say we love someone with our words only to betray that same person with our actions is deceptive and dangerous. If we focus only on the external we could say we really do not love God but ourselves. We pay attention to what gets noticed and praised by others not God.*

Is Jesus being too cruel or mean in what he said to the Pharisees? WHY/ WHY NOT?

- *Jesus' anger in this situation is rooted in love. He loves the Father so passionately that he has to equally passionately oppose those who worship Him in vain to correct and rebuke the hypocrisy.*

Can someone wrestle with sin & temptation & yet not be considered a hypocrite? How?

- *Of course. A hypocrite is deceptive and hides portions of his life from the knowledge of others, but also strives to make himself look better than he is. On the other hand, a believer struggling with sin or temptation finds help and hope through the gift of encouragers and prayer warriors in his/her life.*



GO - Asking Questions That Require Action (6 min)

What do I learn about God's character & how does this CHANGE my thoughts/actions?

- *God values truthfulness and hates fake spirituality. I must be careful about protecting and hiding my struggles with sin. I must be careful about trying to pretend to be more spiritual than I really am in hopes of impressing others.*

What ERROR are we to avoid??

- *I must constantly think about why I do what I do. Am I performing or trying to gain the attention or praise of others? If so, I am not worshipping God, I am worshipping myself.*



ACTIVITY: (5 min) ...see the handout at the end of this guide

EVALUATE how you are perceived by others compared to who you really are when no one is looking? Use the Mask Handout to work through these issues honestly.

- *On one side think about and write down how most people would describe you? (Personality, strengths, weaknesses, reputation, etc. On the other side think about and write down what most people do not know about you, things you try to hide, or even sin issues you may try to protect.*

READ: John 3:19-21 and THINK: What darkness in you needs to be exposed by the light? What things do you keep hidden that need to be revealed?

COMMUNITY & CONCLUSION (10 min)

EXPLAIN: Hypocrisy dies when we stop pretending. Darkness is overcome by the light with confession and vulnerability.

- *I want to encourage you to be willing to find a trusted person you can share your struggles with. Find a spiritually wise person who can pray for you and encourage you.*

CLOSING QUESTIONS: Related to this morning's DIG study and activity... Is anyone willing to **share** a prayer need with the group? How can we **encourage** you this week? How can we hold you **accountable** this week?

- *Please use the above questions and refrain from using the statement, "Does anyone have any prayer requests?" This is too general and doesn't ask the student directly about spiritual issues. Until your group develops greater community invite students to connect with you individually.*

PRAY: Spend time in prayer as a group.

- *This will depend upon the life of your small group and the willingness of the individuals. A big win would be that everyone gets prayed for and every person prays. However, if your group isn't there yet take small baby steps throughout the year.*

ENCOURAGE: Pray for each other & check in with each other for encouragement & accountability.

- *As the adult encourager set the tone and be the lead prayer warrior this week. Give them an example to follow by checking in with your small group via text, GroupMe, or whatever means your small group has adopted for regular communication.*

POST SMALL GROUP STUDENT CONNECTION

CONNECT: With your small group or the students as individuals this week by...

- *Create a jpg (picture) through YouVersion App for the verse 1 John 1:9 and share it with your small group.*
- *Contact students individually saying you wish to pray them more intentionally this week. Ask them if there is anything specific in regards to their relationship with God that you pray about this week.*
- *Encourage them confide in a trusted friend, adult, parent about any struggles they have with sin/temptation. Let light into their darkness.*

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP (For Parents)

PARENTS: Consider the likely situation that your student is currently struggling with destructive impacts on their life and others both spiritually, physically, emotionally, & mentally...

- *How does this motivate you to pray for them? Do you regularly pray for them?*
- *Do you check in with your student regularly to simply ask how you can pray for them? Do you remind them that you are a safe place to talk about hard situations?*
- *Are you quick to acknowledge your failures to your family and seek their forgiveness. Your student needs to see that you are human but also how you are trusting God and repenting of sin.*

Mask Handout

On this side think about and write down how most people would describe you (personality, strengths, weaknesses, reputation).



On this side think about and write down what most people do not know about you, things you try to hide, or even sin issues you may try to protect.



John 3:19-21 *"19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. 21 But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."*

Questions: *What darkness in you needs to be exposed by the light? What things do you keep hidden that need to be revealed?*