

Life Group Preparation Notes:

The Big Issue - The Church is a bunch of hypocrites!

Week2, Sunday morning, 16 July 2017

Worship: Giving thanks is the essence of worship. What one thing are you thankful for? (Not church or "spiritual") Pray one sentence prayers around the circle starting with, Dear God, I am so thankful for...!

Check-in: Share with the group a next step you took in how you view the Church or where your priorities are in light of the Church being the Bride of Christ.

Goal for this week: To find freedom in knowing there is grace for ourselves and others in being the Bride of Christ (The Church).

Background:

The difference between being a hypocrite and a Jesus follower is that we know where to take our pain (or we should). The church is made up of imperfect people and He came to find us.

If we act like a Pharisee, then we need to behave like we should; believe like we should and only then can we belong. For the Jesus follower, we can belong, before we believe or are ready to become by dealing with our pain and brokenness...!

Key Scripture: Genesis 28:16-18

1. Belong - accepted where we are at and affirmed them as His beloved.
2. Believe - on the journey we find Jesus.
3. Become - the work of the Holy Spirit as He works from the inside out.

Scripture verses: Luke 7; Matthew 11:28-30 (The MSG); James 5:16; Matthew 26:31-35

Group Discussion:

1. The definition of hypocrite is claiming to believe something but acting differently. How would you respond to someone (whether Christian or not) when they say the church is full of hypocrites?
2. In Matthew 9:9-13 the gospel writer records how Jesus went to eat at the house of the tax collector. Jesus' response to the Pharisees accusations about Him eating with 'scum' was that "healthy people don't need a doctor, but the sick do". They were able to **belong** without having cleaned up their lives.

Share with the group what Jesus is revealing to us about how God feels about those who are far from Him.

3. There is a tremendous sense of freedom in living a blameless life. Job was blameless. Blameless does not mean perfect. It means that in every situation you do the correct thing. If you sin against someone, you confess your sin and ask for forgiveness. If you sin against God, you repent and begin to obey Him (Prov. 28:13). Neither Satan nor any person could accuse Him of wrongdoing. Even through the most rigorous tests, Job remained above reproach (Job 1:1 - Blameless: *Daily Devotional for Monday, June 26th, 2017*, Blackaby). Share with the group a time when you treated people as you should, where you have responded with integrity as you reconciled with them.
4. Each of us has a testimony of when we accepted Jesus as our Lord and Saviour and what that experience did in our hearts. Share with the group what was your own experience when you felt God's love and acceptance and could put your trust in Him and **believe**.
5. Read Philippians 2:13. It's as we believe and put our trust in Him that He begins the change in us from the inside out. What could you do to '**become**' what God believes about you as you allow the Holy Spirit to do the transforming work in you?

Next Steps:

Take some time in silence to reflect on the attached pdf "[Like Jesus/Like Pharisee](#)" and the actions and attitudes of both the Pharisee and Jesus. Mark off which of the statements (could be more than 1) are applicable as you evaluate your own responses.

Do you respond like Jesus or like the Pharisees?

What characteristics have you been challenged to change?

Journal your thoughts and share with your accountability partner your personal growth next steps.

Others:

Over the coming weeks, ask the Holy Spirit to help you to show compassion to those in your world - varsity, work place, neighbourhood or family this week.

Create the place/space for those in your world to share their hurt or brokenness with you as we come just as we are to Him, being vulnerable and transparent.

Check-out and prayer time:

Take 2 minutes in silence to reflect on why you struggle to commit to His church. Is there something that you need to deal with - an issue, hurt, and disappointment? Take a moment to repent for having a lack of compassion to His church and for ourselves.

Pray back to God your renewed commitment to the church and to growing in your personal relationship with Him and others.