



Session 6: Relating to Others

- OPENING -

Consider using one of the following questions as an opening activity for your group before moving into a closer look at the passage.

- Share about the worst gift you have ever received. What made this gift so terrible and what did you do with it?
- In your experience, what makes for healthy relationships? What makes for unhealthy relationships?

- DISCUSSION -

Judging Others

1. Read Matthew 7:1-6. Judging and being judged by others is likely one of the earliest and most common experiences in all of life. Yet, Jesus presents a radically different way of relating to one another, one built on self-examination, mercy and wisdom, rather than judgement.
 - Have you even been judged in a way that seemed unfair to you? How did you feel about and respond to the situation? What occurred to the relationship you had with the person who judged you?
 - How have you been hypocritical in your judgements of another person? Are there specific relationships in which this judgment is a problem or temptation for you (relationships with a parent, child, co-worker or friend)? What can you do to change the pattern of judgment in a relationship?
 - How are the faults that you judge in others reflected in your own life? Why is this hypocritical judgement so toxic to yourself and to others?
 - Are there faults in your life that you deal with improperly? How do you do this (e.g., blame others, rationalize your behavior, notice how widespread the fault is)?
2. One of the difficult aspects of these verses is that they do not forbid us from judging, after all both the plank and the speck of sawdust need to be removed. Rather they call for us to judge rightly and humbly because we will be judged by God (7:2).
 - How can we balance mercy and judgment in our dealing with our fellow believers?
 - How should our desire for mercy inform the way we should extend mercy?

- How does our need for growth and accountability inform the way we should practice judgement?
 - What would it look like to judge others like you want to be judged?
3. Matthew 7:6 seems to encourage wisdom and discernment before engaging another person with faults.
- How have you engaged the faults of others in ways that were unwise?
 - How can you discern when a person is ready to have a fault addressed?
 - What needs to happen first in your own heart and life before approaching someone else about their faults?

Ask, Seek, Knock

4. Read Matthew 7:7-12. Following on the heels of a sobering warning about judgment, this passage reminds us of God's graciousness and goodness, a Father who knows what His children need and how to give to them.
- Why is this topic potentially comforting and reassuring given the prior verses on judgment?
 - What good things do you think Jesus has in mind that the Father gives to us?
 - How can you use these verses to embolden your prayer life as you pray for your family, your church, your community and the world?
5. One of the difficult realities that face many is that our fathers did not leave us a positive image of God as our Father.
- How might your experiences of your father help or hinder your view of God?
 - What can you do to reframe your view of God as father so that Scripture, rather than your experiences determine your view of God?
6. The passage ends with what is known as The Golden Rule: *Do to others what you would have them do to you.*
- How does this principle tie together justice and mercy?
 - How would consistently living out The Golden Rule change every area of your life (e.g., marriage, friendships, parenting, HomeGroup, work, neighborhood)?
 - What relationship in particular do you need to ask for God's grace and strength to live out this principle?
7. The Golden Rule reminds us of the two greatest commandments: Love God and love others.
- How is loving God and loving others a prerequisite for healthy relationships?
 - How is loving God and loving others a prerequisite for dealing with the specks in other people's eyes?

- CLOSING -

- Spend time in prayer giving thanks to God for the good things He has graciously given to us.
- What relationships that have been harmed by hypocritical judgement do you need to address?
- Who in your life can you reach out to and serve this week?