

MESSAGE BIG IDEA

The way of Jesus exposes our misguided pursuit for significance and invites us into a better way.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:1-6, Numbers 6:23-27

ICEBREAKER AND OPENING THOUGHT

Use the icebreaker and opening thoughts to begin the conversation.

BIBLE DISCUSSION

1. Read Matthew 6:1-6. What Jesus is driving at is the motivation and intention behind our actions. Jesus wants us to be careful that we don't do our acts of righteousness in front of others in order to be seen and subsequently praised by them. Instead, God wants us to do our "acts of righteousness" in pursuit of him and the good of the world.
2. Read Numbers 6:24-26. God's face shines on us. God looks at us with love.

LIFE APPLICATION

Questions we could ask ourselves about motivations: Am I upset when I don't get recognized, or when others do, and I don't? Am I irritated when I don't get my wishes when it comes to giving? Do I expect my way because I gave or how much I give?

How do we know if we're seeking the approval of others?

- You are motivated/unmotivated in your work, friendships, church, etc., by the praise or lack of praise of those around you.
- Your decisions are often driven by what others will think.
- You are easily discouraged, irritated, or angry when others do not appreciate your efforts or when others receive credit for something you have done.
- You only portray the admirable aspects of your life to those around you.
- Your relationships only go so deep that your struggles are not revealed.

Here are a few markers of the person who is pursuing the approval of God before and above everyone and everything else:

- You find joy when God is glorified, even if you receive no attention or praise in the process.
- You are excited for those who do well and compassionate, and gracious towards those who fail.
- You are honest about your struggles, failures, and sin, recognizing that you are a work in progress.
- You do not feel the need to portray a certain type of life on social media and do not need a high volume of likes and comments to feel good about yourself.
- You seek to know and pursue what Christ values more than climbing the ladder of success and seeking what the world values.

CHALLENGE

God is always with us. In a culture obsessed with selfies and "notice me", God says, 'I already see you fully and completely. I know your best moments and your worst ones, and I still call you beloved.' Take time at the end of your session to practice silence & stillness, to stop all activity and enter into an awareness of God's presence, resting in God's love. Commit to practicing silence & stillness over the next week, intentionally meeting this desire to be seen and noticed by being seen and noticed by God.

Consider adding this card to either the regular or leader guide: https://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/ssguidelines_card_web.pdf