



UNDERSTANDING ONE ANOTHER - 3

"Seeing One Another Through the Eyes of Christ"

KEY PASSAGE:

"If anyone is causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with that person. For people like that have turned away from the truth. They are sinning, and they condemn themselves."
[Titus 3:10-11 NLT]

GROUP QUESTIONS:

It is far easier to find fault with others than to understand them. Fault-finding is wrong even when your evaluation is accurate. True understanding will enable you to judge in the correct way. For the following questions, the concept of "being critical" is used in the negative sense of finding fault and condemning.

1. Read Matthew 7:1-5 and James 4:11-12. Why should you not be critical of others?
2. Describe a time when you harshly judged and condemned another only to find you practiced the same thing as the person you condemned.
3. What does Romans 2:1-2 say about you when you are critical of others?
4. Read the story of the adulterous woman (John 8)
 - a. Place yourself in the story as the adulterous woman, the scribes and Pharisees, and as Jesus; who do you identify with most?
 - b. Describe a time when you were each of people; how did it feel to be under condemnation? How did it feel to be forgiven? How did it feel to be the one condemning?
 - c. When you see someone caught in a sin are you more likely to act like the religious leaders (condemnation) or Jesus (mercy)? Why?
5. How are we using the Bible as a weapon (self-righteousness) in our relationships with those who sin or otherwise do not meet up with our ideal (letter of the law vs. the spirit of the law?)
6. How do we use the Bible to condemn or critically judge ourselves?
7. Read Romans 3:23. What should your view of others be in light of the fact that we have **all** fallen short?
8. A wise person once said, "Sometimes it's better to say less." What is one step you can take this week to refrain from speaking critically to one another?
9. Titus 3:10-11 give us instructions that may lead to a difficult decision regarding someone we're in relationship with. Have you had a situation where you have disassociated with a divisive person?

WORKING AS A TEAM:

God's Part – What part does God play in your life when it comes to being less critical of others?

Your Part – What steps do you need to take right now to be less critical of others and to see them through God's eyes?

Their Part – You feel loved when you are not judged for your convictions. How can you help others understand you better so that you accepted?

THE DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS:

Spiritual Infant – The language/behaviors of a spiritual infant is characterized by lack of understanding. Infants may be highly critical, judging the weaknesses of others compared to their own strengths.

Spiritual Child - The language/behaviors of a spiritual child is characterized by self-centeredness. Children may become very offended vs. forgiving when others are critical of them. This can cause new believers to stumble and separate from the body.

Spiritual Adolescent - The language of a spiritual adolescent is characterized by God and other-centeredness and service. Adolescents recognize the difference between being critical and being encouraging. They will ask permission before giving their opinions and will not hold offense against those critical of them.

Spiritual Parent - The language of a spiritual parent is characterized by intentionality and strategy. They have accepted the fact that diversity and opposites characterize life. Parents encourage the weak and use words that edify, not tear down. Parents model forgiveness.

ADDITIONAL ADULT STUDY / HOMEWORK:

1. Look up each of these verses in your Bible and write them out by hand, making them personal. For example, instead of writing *"And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own?"* write *"And why worry about a speck in my (wife's/daughter's/brother's/boss'/etc) eye when I have a log in my own?"* Then answer the following questions:

Matthew 7:3-5

James 4:11-12

Romans 14:10

Romans 14:3-4

- In what ways are you judging the weaknesses of others against your strengths?
- Who do you know that has more maturity in your perceived weaknesses? How would you feel to be judged by them?
- Do you understand more now than you did when you first met Christ? In light of James 3:1, what should your responsibility be with the knowledge you continue to receive?
- Are you willing to be compassionate/understanding towards those who struggle as you once struggled?

ADDITIONAL FAMILY STUDIES / HOMEWORK (For 1st Grade and up):

This past weekend, your young person learned about the story of David & Mephibosheth. Please take time during the week to have a discussion upon the principles of understanding utilizing the following questions.

1. Can you retell the story to me?
2. What act of kindness did David do?
3. Why was that act out of the ordinary?
4. How did David receive Mephibosheth in an understanding way?
5. How can you apply this story to your life?