

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides

December 3rd

Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)

1. What is your favorite Dr. Seuss book? Why?

Bible Study Questions

1. How do you generally deal with family members or coworkers who are prideful?
2. CS Lewis says that “*pride is a spiritual cancer, it eats the very possibility of love and contentment, or even common sense.*” Why do you believe that pride is so dangerous?
3. How does pride misplace where we get our self worth?
4. Pride always divides. Do you ever find yourself in a setting in which you look down on certain people?
 - What kind of people are you most likely to view in this way?
 - Are there any kind of jobs that you feel that are beneath your experience and abilities?
5. Read both Luke 14:7-14 and Philippians 2:3-4. What do these verses teach about dealing with pride? What is hard about these commands?
6. Read Philippians 2:5-11
 - What do you notice about Jesus’ example?
 - What do we have in the Christmas story that tells us about the humility of Jesus?
 - How does Jesus example help us embrace a position of humility?
7. What are some practical things that you can do this Christmas to “be the loser” and embrace a position of humility?

December 3rd: The Grinch Within: Pride

In the Dr. Seuss book, *Yertle the Turtle*, we find the story of a prideful turtle who commands turtles to stack underneath him so that he can have a greater view of his kingdom. At some point, the turtle falls and becomes the king of mud. Yertle is what we think of when we think of a prideful person. Generally we view that person as someone else and are blind to pride's presence in our own lives. The truth is that it impacts us all. As CS Lewis writes, it is the "*one vice of which no man in the world is free,*" Pride is a reoccurring theme in Scripture. .

I. The Problem of Pride

- **Pride always divides:** In Luke 14:7-11, Jesus observes guests competing for places of honor at a dinner table. In that culture, one wanted honor and honor was bestowed upon those seated closest to the host. Instead of others being people to be loved, they are treated as competitors for honor. In our own families, pride can lead us to treat people different based on their accomplishments or their lifestyle choices. It separates people into the have and have nots.
- **Pride creates attitude of privilege:** When we are prideful, we convince ourselves that we deserve certain privileges. When we don't get the attention or respect that we think we deserve, we are offended.
- **Pride misplaces our worth:** Pride tells us that our value is in our accomplishments or possessions instead of in our value and the children of God.
Note: Pride also makes us unteachable and is a constant barrier between us and God.

II. The Solution

- **Choose to be the loser:** In Luke 14:7-11, Jesus challenges his audience to intentionally take the least important seat at the meal. They were to take the spot that no body wanted. To do so would have been unheard of in that context. In Philippians 2:3, Paul says that we should in humility value others above ourselves.
- **God promises to honor the humble:** In Luke 7:10, Jesus says that if one takes the seat that no one wants, then the host will notice and honor that person. In verse 11, Jesus says that the one who humbles himself will be exalted. We see this same theme throughout the Bible (Job 5:11, Psalms 138:6, Luke 1:52, and Matthew 18:4). Even if this doesn't happen in this life, God will bring that honor in the next.

III. Our job is to follow the example of Jesus: In Philippians 2:5-11, Paul tells us to have the same attitude as Jesus. Jesus had every right to be prideful, but he emptied himself and became a servant. The Christmas story itself tells of the king of kings being born in a humble manger. Our calling is to follow his example.

Conclusion

The antidote to the grinch of pride is to intentionally look for ways to follow Jesus' example by serving. This may mean doing tasks around the house such as cleaning or dishes. It may involve spending time helping with kids or being with people that most choose not to hang out with. Every act of service helps to diminish the grinch of pride.