

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides

July 17th

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

1. July 17th is national emoji day. What emoji best represents how you feel tonight? How do you feel about that?

Bible Study Questions

1. Read Matthew 18:15-20
 - What do you notice about Jesus teachings? What point is Jesus trying to make?
2. Jesus is addressing a situation involved a wandering disciples. What are some examples of sin issues that would make this kind of action appropriate?
3. What is the difference between showing judgment on someone and challenging them because of sin in their life?
4. Pastor Michael talked about a habit that Christians have of “triangulating” in which they talk with other people about the issue instead of going straight to the one involved. How have you experienced this? Why is this so damaging?
5. Pastor Michael suggested that this teaching from Jesus is a principle that applies in most situations, but not all (such as the sin impacting a position of church leadership or safety). Do you agree or disagree? Why?
6. Read Proverbs 27:5-6. How do you think you would respond if someone were to challenge you about sin in your life? What kind of approach would work with you? What approaches don't work?
 - How do we become more teachable in this situation?

July 17th: A Community of Restoration

Matthew 18:15-20 is a passage that is often used to teach about conflict resolution. While it has value there, Jesus has a different application in mind. His focus is on restoration.

I. Background

- **Jesus is addressing an issue about a wandering disciple:** This teaching directly follows his telling the story of the good shepherd who was a mission to find wandering sheep. In verse 15, he sets it up by saying that “*if your brother or sister sins,*” meaning that it is a situation in which a disciple has a sin issue that is threatening to derail their faith.
- **Jesus is instructing his followers on how to do restoration:** Jesus is not instructing a church institution on how to do discipline. He is addressing a community of equals on how they should do restoration in the context of their church community.
- **The motivation of this action is love for one another:** Our culture tells us to mind our own business and to celebrate the choices of others. Jesus commands us not to judge, but we are to actively love each other. Love does not tolerate one making self destructive choices. As a community that loves each other, Christians should be looking out for each other’s best interest and challenging things that get in the way of that happening.

Instructions on restoration

- **Begin by addressing the issue one on one. Reject triangulation:** Jesus tells them to first go to the person and point out the fault (18:15). In order to avoid confrontation, our culture often “triangulates” but talking about the fault with other people. The result is the spread of gossip and painful divisions in the church.
- **Secondly invite a third party into the intervention:** If the first step fails, then the accusing person should bring a 2nd or 3rd person into the intervention (18:16). That extra person can serve as a third party that can help determine whether the concern is legitimate or not. If the concern is legitimate, then they can add weight to the charge.
- **Thirdly invite the community to intervene:** At this point the entire church community needs to be involved (18:17). The hope is that the weight of the community will make a difference.
- **Lastly, break off the relationship** (18:17). This is the hardest step. If repentance does not happen, then they should be treated like a tax collector, which in the time of Jesus, meant that the relationship should be broken off. This was to happen for two reasons. 1 Corinthians 5 tells us that this an act of tough love to bring about

repentance. It also protects the rest of the community from falling into the same pattern of sin.

Conclusion

These steps may seem harsh, but the point behind them is the restoration of a wandering disciple. Many of us have someone in our lives that we need to reach out to and confront. However, there is something here that applies to every one of us. Jesus established this for our own benefit. If someone were to confront us about a sin in our lives, do we have the teachability to receive that?