

Small Group Guide: A Christian's Posture Towards the World

Key Takeaways:

1. Jesus teaches that a Christian's posture towards the world should be merciful, humble, and discerning.
2. Judgment often leads to being critical, withdrawing from culture, or blending in - none of which are appropriate Christian responses.
3. Mercy gives true sight by seeing everyone under the cross of Jesus Christ.
4. Humility involves evaluating yourself first before attempting to help others.
5. Discernment is necessary, but should be exercised with mercy and humility.

Discussion Questions:

1. How have you experienced or witnessed judgmental attitudes within the Christian community? How has this affected your faith or relationships?
2. Jesus says, "Do not judge so that you won't be judged." How do you understand this teaching in light of the need for discernment?
3. The sermon mentions that we often "judge our assumption of others' motives." Can you share an example of when you've done this? How might we avoid this tendency?
4. How can we balance being distinct as Christians without withdrawing from or blending into society?
5. The pastor states, "Humility removes the beam from your own eye first." What does this look like in practical terms?
6. How does seeing ourselves and others "under the cross of Jesus Christ" change our perspective and actions?
7. What are some ways we can practice being "quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger" in our daily interactions?

8. How can we discern when someone is ready to hear about Jesus without being aggressively evangelistic?

Practical Applications:

1. This week, when you're tempted to judge someone, pause and ask God, "What are you trying to show me about myself first?"
2. Identify an area where you've been critical of yourself or others. Practice extending mercy in that area, remembering God's mercy towards you.
3. Choose one relationship or situation where you've been tempted to withdraw or blend in. Brainstorm ways to engage meaningfully while maintaining your Christian distinctiveness.
4. Before sharing your faith this week, pray for discernment about whether the person is ready to hear. Focus on building the relationship rather than "pushing" the gospel.
5. Reflect on how God has shown you mercy. Write down specific examples and use them as reminders when interacting with others who may be difficult to love.
6. Practice active listening in your conversations this week. Try to understand the other person's perspective before offering your own thoughts or advice.
7. Identify a societal issue where Christians are often perceived negatively. Research ways Christians are actually making a positive impact in that area, and consider how you might contribute.