



WHAT IF JESUS WAS SERIOUS

DIGGING DEEPER

JUDGING, ASKING, BLESSING

NOVEMBER 12

If Jesus was serious, then the way we see God, ourselves, and others, must change.

Work through the following questions and scriptures on your own, and get together with your running partner, life group, or friends and family to talk through what you are learning.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your biggest pet peeve (aka, where are you quickest to judge)?
2. Read **Matthew 7:1-12**.
Make some observations about this passage (What does the text say?):
 - What do you notice and what are you curious about?Make some interpretations (What does the passage mean?):
 - What do you learn about God?
 - What do you learn about humanity?Now make some applications (what's my response?):
 - How are you encouraged, challenged, or convicted by this passage?
 - What should be our response to this passage?
3. Think for a moment how judgment plays out in your mind. What is that process like for you? How do you feel when you are judging someone and how do you feel when you know you're being judged?
4. Are you quick to notice when there's a speck in your eye? In other words, do you consider yourself a self-aware person? Why or why not?
 - Who in your life helps you pluck the speck from your eye? If you don't have someone, what can you start doing now to grow in your self-awareness?
5. Read **James 2:1-13**.
 - Who do you tend to show favoritism in life and who do you tend to look down on?
 - How can you begin to shift your focus toward seeing others as people made in God's image, not objects to be used or projects to fix? How can this group help you grow in this?

Matthew 7:1-12 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Romans 12:14-21 My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong? If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, “You shall not commit adultery,” also said, “You shall not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

PRAYER

A major way we combat a judgmental heart and begin to see others with eyes of love is through prayer- asking, seeking, knocking. Pray the following Psalm over the group and invite the group to respond in the following ways:

Search me, God, and know my heart;
 test me and know my anxious thoughts.
 See if there is any offensive way in me,
 and lead me in the way everlasting.
 -Psalm 139:23-24

- Confess ways you have judged and condemned others in your heart.
- Invite God in to heal this area of brokenness.
- Pray for God to give you His eyes to see others the way He does and for the wisdom to know how to do to others what you would have them do to you.

TAKE A NEXT STEP

1. Consider thoughtfully reading or listening through the whole Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) weekly throughout the series.
2. Take daily inventory of your thoughts and interactions with others and note where you experienced judgmental and condemning thoughts. Ask yourself the question posed by Dr. Becky Kennedy, "What's the most generous interpretation of _____'s behavior." Pray from that place, choosing to view the person through the lens of mercy, grace and generosity.

FOR THE PARENTS

THIS WEEK

All month long we are going to be talking about how Joseph had big dreams but God's plans for him were even bigger!

THE BIBLE: Genesis 50:20 "You attended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." (Genesis 50:20)

THE MESSAGE: Waiting for God to act can be hard. It is in these times that we need to remind ourselves that God always sees the big picture and that we can trust Him. Waiting in faithfulness is beyond our power unless we rely on Jesus. When we find ourselves waiting and God seems silent, we can remind ourselves of all of the times God came through for us. When we focus on our circumstances, we can easily become discouraged. When we focus on God, like Joseph did, we are reminded that there is always hope and God sees the big picture. Joseph's years in prison were not wasted. God used every circumstance to bring about His plan.

THE BIG IDEA: God sees the big picture!

ASK THIS

Because sometimes you and your kid need a conversation-starter that isn't, "So . . . how was church?"

- ***How did God show up for Joseph when he was rejected and beaten by his brothers? How has God shown up for you when you were having a hard time?***

REMEMBER THIS

God uses even difficult times in our lives for our good and His purposes. Often times all we can do during these times is wait. We wait for a breakthrough and we wait for freedom. Joseph was imprisoned on false charges, yet he waited 2 full years before being released! I get impatient when I have to wait 2 days for an answer! Remembering that God always sees the big picture can help us wait. Know that God has good things for us...despite what is going on around us.

NEXT WEEK

Next week, we will learn how Joseph felt pressure when he goes before Pharaoh.