

DISCUSSION GUIDE :: WEEK 2

STOP, COLLABORATE & LISTEN
I'M JEALOUS OF YOUR MOTOROLA
MATTHEW 20:8-15
09/17/2017



MAIN POINT

We fight off jealousy by considering others as better than ourselves and giving in to God's jealousy for our love.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is the best news a friend or family member shared with you recently? What made this news so good in their eyes?

How did you respond to the good news of your friend? Are you always happy for other people when they share good news with you? Why or why not?

While we would like to think that we are always happy for our friends when they receive good news, this is not always the case. If we are honest, we often struggle with feelings of jealousy, particularly when those closest to us receive blessings we think we deserve. This is nothing new to relationships; in fact, it was the root of the first crime in the Bible, when Cain wanted the approval that Abel had from God. Jealousy, if left unchecked, hinders both our relationship with God and others. If we hope to overcome the jealousy that corrupts our hearts we must be excited for the success of others, consider others as actually better than ourselves, and give in to God's jealousy for us.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 20:8-15.

Why didn't the workers in this parable appreciate the generosity of their employer? Where was their focus?

Why is it tempting to compare what we get from God with what someone else gets? What happens when we do?

Instead of jealousy, what is the more God-honoring way we should respond to the success of others? Do you find that type of response challenging? If so, explain why.

Instead of marveling at the generosity of the master, the workers were too busy looking at each other to notice. When we start coveting the gifts God gives to others, we start complaining. Instead of being grateful for what God has given us, we grumble about what God has given someone else. The healthier, more God-honoring response is to be excited for the successes of others, not threatened by them. Anytime we think we are not getting something we deserve, we should remember that we deserve to pay the penalty for our sins, and yet, God demonstrated His love for us by sending Jesus to die for us while we were still sinners (Rom. 5:8). God's love is most profoundly displayed in the grace He offers us through the death of His Son. That grace should radically change the way we love others. God is generous by nature, and we should be excited when we see His generosity at work in the lives of others.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 2:3.

In a section of his letter to the Philippians about unity and humility in the church, Paul challenged his readers to “in humility consider others better than yourselves.” Why is it hard for you to consider others as more important than yourself?

Is there one area of your life in which you particularly struggle with this? Why do you think you struggle in that area?

Often it's the relationships closest to us (our spouses, kids, parents, etc.) in which we most struggle to think of ourselves second. Why do you think that is?

What do we show we believe about God when we are willing to put others first?

It's never easy to think of someone else's needs and desires ahead of your own, especially when you live in close proximity with those people. We feel like we have to look out for our own needs, or no one will. But if we truly believe God can and does care for our needs, one of the ways we show that belief is by putting others first. If you find it a challenge to take this approach to relationships, remember that they have a soul and are dearly loved by God. Therefore, they should be dearly loved by you. You are not more valuable than anyone else in God's eyes. All are of equal, and great, value.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EXODUS 20:4-6.

In contrast to the jealousy we bring into relationships, the Ten Commandments remind us that our God is a jealous God. In what sense do you think God is “jealous”? How is that different from the way a human might be jealous?

We may not struggle with serving multiple gods, but what are some modern-day idols people worship? How do these idols impact our relationship with God?

What are some ways being mindful of God's jealousy for you could positively impact your relationships with others?

A basic thrust of this Second Commandment is that we should allow no substitutes for God in our lives; nothing should take the Lord's place. Idol worship is forbidden in this passage because the Lord is a jealous God. The Hebrew word translated “jealous” also could be translated “zealous.” The word in this context does not denote a negative quality such as pettiness. Rather the word conveys the fact that God expects complete loyalty from His people. When you remember how dearly loved you are by God (so much so that He made the ultimate sacrifice to be in a relationship with

you), it should motivate you to be committed to that relationship. When your relationship with God matters most of all, then all the relationships in your life shift into godly perspective.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What causes you to lose sight of the generosity and grace of God in your life? How can we maintain our focus on God's grace when we feel like life is unfair?

How do we demonstrate faith in the gospel when we delight in the successes of others? What are some practical measures we could take to respond joyfully to the grace of God in the lives of those around us?

What do you need to do in response to God's jealousy for you? How can our group motivate each other to give Him the love and priority He is due?

PRAY

Thank God for His unmerited love and kindness. Pray that He would help us let go of our jealousy by remembering His promises and savoring His grace.

COMMENTARY

MATTHEW 20:8-15

20:8-12. The custom was that workers would be paid in the evening. The master instructs the "foreman" to pay them beginning with the last and going to the first. The last were not just paid first but given payment for a full day of work, a denarius. The first group saw this and expected that they would receive more than the late groups, but when they were paid they only received a denarius. The complaint from the first workers is that the master had made the last "equal to us." There was no difference between those working one hour and those who worked the whole day. From their point of view this was a great injustice.

20:13-16. The master responds to one of the complainers, addressing him as "friend." The master's answer has two arguments. First, because the master had held up to the original agreement, no real injustice had been done to the workers. Second, it was the desire of the master to treat the last ones as he had treated those who worked all day. The verbs "wish" and "give" in the second statement convey the idea of grace. The last did not deserve what they were given, but they received it based on the desire of the master of the vineyard. Jesus' point is that the last will be shown grace and the first will receive their reward in time and in the justice of God.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3

The word nothing (v. 3) emphasized Paul's conviction that rivalry or conceit should not taint any aspect of the church's life. The term rivalry implies a selfish ambition that causes disputes and divisions. The sense is that the problems facing the Philippians caused members to choose sides. Paul saw schisms in the church as contrary to the testimony of Christ and dishonoring to God's name. Also the word conceit describes what is vainglorious or groundless pride. The cornerstone of Christian faith is that humans are powerless to save themselves and must trust Christ to provide all that is necessary for salvation. Thus the believer has no basis for arrogance toward others. Furthermore, arrogance strikes at the heart of Christian unity, spoiling the testimony of the faithful.

EXODUS 20:4-6

Idol worship is forbidden in this passage because the Lord is a jealous God. The Hebrew word translated jealous also could be translated "zealous." The word in this context does not denote a negative quality such as pettiness that we often associate with jealousy in our culture. Rather the word jealous in this context conveys the fact that God expects

complete loyalty from His people. Genuine love is exclusive in a positive sense. God is zealous that we worship Him alone because He knows that such worship will result in what is best for our lives. Because of God's great love for us, He wants us to experience the best life possible.