

Small Group Study

Our Vision

To know God and enjoy Him forever.

Our Mission

To build a Christian community by making fully devoted disciples of non-religious and nominally religious people

Discussion

Emotional Freedom: Emotions Set Free



Discussion Questions

Only about ten percent of an iceberg is visible above the surface. That is the part of our lives of which we are aware. It is also what we do that people can see--go to church, attend small group, be courteous to one another, give financially, etc. Deep beneath the surface of our lives, however, are layers of childhood wounds, unconscious motivations and fears, defenses, and memories/experiences we have forgotten.

As human beings, God created us as very complex and intricate creatures. We have many different aspects to who we are (emotional, spiritual, etc.), but we also have many different layers. In our daily decisions, all sorts of motivations, thoughts, and impulses are at work. Some we're conscious of, but others we're not. Ever since the Fall, we human beings have been running away from the full truth about ourselves.

1. Although we know that the truth sets us free (John 8:32), why do you think unmasked honesty is so difficult for people? In what ways or situations is it difficult for you?

2. Jesus knew that each of us was a walking iceberg, and He had a knack for taking people below the surface into the depths of their lives.

Read John 4:7-18. How does Jesus move the Samaritan woman from surface concerns to the deeper issues of her life and faith?

3. What relational pattern was Jesus pointing the woman's attention to? What were the symptoms of her life?

Ice Breaker

Use ONE of the questions to help people open up and to focus your meeting. It is very helpful to go around in a circle with the leader going first. (Remember if you have new members or guests you should take time to introduce everyone.)

1. What is one thing that used to bother you, bug you, or hinder you in the past that no longer does?
2. What are 1-3 accomplishments you've achieved that you are proud of?
3. What are 1-3 activities you've done in the past that you can't believe you did?

4. How would you describe her response to Jesus' exposing her iceberg?

5. How do you tend to respond when people or circumstances expose hidden layers underneath the visible surface of your iceberg? Explain.

6. Patterns in our life and relationships are often a sign that we're acting out from deep places in our iceberg. They usually reveal a "bug" in our emotional programming, something that plays out over and over again in our life. If you or a close loved one notice a "pattern of unhealth" emerging in your life, that is usually a good sign that something's amiss in your internal wiring.

Try your best to complete the statements below.

"Most of the time, I feel like I am _____. "
(e.g. invisible, unimportant, failing, guilty)

"What often happens to me in relationships is _____. "
(e.g. people leave me, take advantage of me, betray me)

"Why do others at work or school keep on _____ me?"
(e.g. ignoring, expecting unrealistic things of, criticizing)

"When I am under stress I often find myself _____ "
(e.g. fighting, angry, medicating myself, blaming others, losing myself in an unhealthy way)

"When I think about the future I feel _____. "
(e.g. depressed, anxious, lost, unsure)

7. What is one step you can take this week to look beneath the iceberg of your life?

8. Jesus comes to offer emotional freedom through the power of love. He made it clear that love is to be the mark of the church in the world. And we love others by following Jesus in His incarnation. Like Him we too must:

1. Enter another's world
2. Hold on to ourselves
3. Hang between two worlds

Name one person in your life who has loved you well. Describe their qualities. What caused them to stand out from all the others in your life?

9. Give yourself this short listening test. Circle all the statements that you can affirm.

1. I make a great effort to enter other people's experience of life.
2. I do not presume to know what the other person is trying to communicate.
3. My close friends would say I listen more than I speak.
4. When people are angry at me, I am able to listen to their side without getting upset.
5. People share freely with me because they know I listen well.
6. I listen not only to what people say but also for their nonverbal cues, body language, tone of voice, and the like.
7. I give people my individual attention when they are talking to me.
8. I am able to reflect back and validate another person's feelings with empathy.
9. I am aware of my primary defense mechanisms when I am under stress, such as placating, blaming, problem-solving prematurely, or becoming distracted.
10. I am aware of how the family in which I was raised has influenced my present listening style.
11. I ask for clarification when I am not clear on something another person is saying, rather than attempting to fill in the blanks.
12. I never assume anything, especially anything negative, unless it is clearly stated by the person speaking.
13. I ask questions when listening rather than mind-reading or making assumptions.
14. I don't interrupt or listen for openings to get my point across when another is speaking.
15. I am aware when I am listening of my own personal "hot buttons" that cause me to get angry, upset, fearful, or nervous.

If you checked 12 or more, you are an outstanding listener; 8-11, very good; 5-7, good; 4 or fewer, poor. If you want to be really brave, after you score yourself, ask your spouse or closest friend to rate you as a listener.

What did you learn about yourself from this experience?

10. Read Philippians 2:5-11. Based on this passage, what did it cost Jesus to leave heaven and enter our world? Be specific.

11. What does it cost you and me to leave our reality and comfort and to truly "walk in another person's shoes" and enter their world?

12. Finally, what does the image of Jesus hanging on the cross, between heaven and earth, teach us about loving other people?

God bless,

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