



Sermon-Based Discussion Guide for Home Groups

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God's Grace, my sin

Series: Big God

January 23, 2011

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Scripture

Luke 18:9-14

⁹ To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

¹³ "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

¹⁴ "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

Engage

What is the path to pleasing God according to most people in our society? Is it correct or not? How do you think they came by those thoughts?

Discuss

1. Read the passage above. What contrasts would you draw between the Pharisee and the tax collector?
2. How do you think most people in the church approach God, more like the Pharisee or more like the tax collector? You don't have to answer this out loud, but how do you approach God?
3. According to our culture, would the Pharisee have earned heaven?

4. Isaiah 64:6 says that our righteous acts are like filthy rags before God. Based on that, how hard is it to impress God?
5. One test of how we understand sin is this misconception: “My sin is no big deal compared to other people.” Where does this philosophy lead us and why is it dangerous?
6. Where did we ever get the idea that God grades on a curve? How does God grade? (Divide these verses and have group members read Rev. 3:16, Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23. One sin makes us a sinner just like one bank robbery makes us a bank robber.)

What else do we learn from these verses?

7. Read 1 John 1:9. How happy should we be about this verse? (Confess means to “agree with God” about our sin.)

1 John 1:9

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

8. The second misconception is that our sin is so great that God would never forgive. How can we have that misconception? How can we know God can forgive our sin?
9. Read the following passage. How seriously should we take our sin?

Isaiah 59:1-2

1 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.

2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

Your Next Step

Develop a daily time of confession before God. Think through the last 24 hours and confess any wrong actions you discover, having asked the Holy Spirit to reveal sin to you.

Children's Time

1. What is sin? How would you tell a friend what it means?
2. Overview the focus scripture for today. Ask kids what they learn from this passage?
3. Discuss with the children how God looks at us and how big a deal our sin is to God.
4. Read 1 John 1:9 and discuss what it means.
5. Talk with children about how they can be made right with God through Jesus.

Other Passages Cited

No more available.