

BLIND? WHO'S BLIND?

by Brent Gehman

KEY VERSE:

Luke 6:39

He (Jesus) also told them a parable: "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit?"

FAITH STORY:

Luke 6:37-45

FAITH FOCUS:

Too many times we consider ourselves better than others, but we are the ones who need God's forgiveness. We cannot lead the blind when we ourselves are at fault, because we will both fall down. We can't fix the broken when we remain broken. We must first be healed out of God's love and grace; then in return, God's love will flow through us to those around us. Those who seek God with all their hearts will be recognized by their actions. Those who truly love Jesus will bring forth good deeds, but those who are wicked will produce evil deeds.

SESSION GOAL:

To encourage students to make a strong relationship with Jesus a priority rather than being all wrapped up in judging what other people are doing.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this session, the students will:

- Identify how judging others affects them.
- Identify the importance of forgiveness.
- Understand that a pure heart produces Christ-like actions, and an evil heart produces negative actions.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- 1 Enough blindfolds for all the students.
- 2 Boxes or pieces of wood to make obstacles for the students to walk through.
- 3 A cross, a candle, a small table and tablecloth for a worship center.
- 4 Bible for each student
- 5 Paper and markers

SESSION OUTLINE

FOCUS: (10 minutes)

Hand out blindfolds to every student. Have the students line up at one end of the room. Tell them all to put on the blindfolds. While they are doing this, put some obstacles in the middle

of the room. Pair the students up, then tell the one in each pair with the birthday closest to today to be the leader. The leader (still blindfolded) will lead the other person through the obstacle course. When everyone is on the other side of the room, ask the person in each pair who was not the leader to remove their own blindfold. They should now lead their partner back through the course.

When everyone is done, discuss:

How was the second time different from the first? Why was it easier?

CONNECT: (5 minutes)

Ask:

- How does the activity we just did relate to being misjudged?
- Have you ever thought you could see a situation “clearly” and later found out you were wrong?
- When has someone misjudged you?
- How did you feel?

Share a time when you were misjudged and how it made you feel.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE: (10–15 minutes)

Ask students to open their Bibles to Luke 6:37-45. Ask them to follow along as you or one of the students reads the scripture. Then ask students to just listen—listen for something that jumps out at them, maybe something they didn’t notice before—as you read the scripture again.

After you are done, ask:

- What stood out? Why?
- What are some things that Jesus is trying to tell us?
- Does this make sense?
- Is this important for our everyday lives?

Divide into three groups. Ask group one to act out verses 39-40, group two verses 41-42, and group three verses 43-45. If you have a larger class, more than one group can act out the same passage.

APPLY: (10–15 minutes)

Share this mini-lecture with students:

Jesus wasn’t just talking to the people standing in front to him at the time. He was talking to all of us. It is important that we understand how judging others affects our relationship with God. If we judge others, we have to realize that at the same time, God is judging us. Not only are we then condemning ourselves, but we miss out on displaying Christ-like actions to those we judged. We also have to realize the importance of Jesus’ parable. When we try to fix others problems/sins before we let Jesus fix us, then we are going to be like the blind leading the blind. We are not going to get anywhere—in fact we might be better off just letting them go

instead of trying to help. Once we get fixed, or remove the plank in our own eye, then we can truly begin to help those around us. Just as Jesus tells us a good tree doesn't bear bad fruit, and a bad tree doesn't bear good fruit, so also we first must fix our eyes on Jesus, then we will bear good fruit. If we fix our eyes on other things, we will fail.

Hand out the paper and markers. Ask students to draw a picture of themselves as a tree. What kind of fruit is on the tree? Good fruit? Fruit that looks good on the outside but is rotten on the inside? Fruit that is bad? How do they feel about the fruit on their tree?

Ask students to draw a "plank" and write on it the plank that is in their own eye.

Discuss: How do you become a good tree? How do you get the plank out of your own eye?

Allow students to answer before you say: We can't do this on our own—God has to change us. We need God to change our identity as a tree and get the plank out of our eye.

RESPOND: (5–10 minutes)

Gather students at the worship center, light the candle and turn off the lights. Give blindfolds back to students. Explain that you are going to give them time to sit in silence and darkness, to think about what kind of tree they are, and what the planks are in their eyes.

Ask students to put blindfolds on, then to pray to God and listen to God talking to their heart.

After several minutes of silence, say:

If you are willing to have God work in your life, to help change the bad fruit into good fruit, to take the planks out of your eyes, then take off your blindfold and place it at the foot of the cross.

Close with a prayer.

INSIGHTS FROM SCRIPTURE:

When we think of the word "judge," we think of exercising discrimination, but here in Luke it is based on the assumption that one has the capacity to separate good people from bad people. "Condemn" takes that idea a step further—it means to judge that person to be guilty, thus taking on the role of God. We as Christians should point out the good in people like Jesus commands us to do. But too often we prefer to discover the worst in people and not the best, and this self-righteous, judgmental attitude is the very opposite of what Jesus demands of us. Those who judge are guilty of the worst kind of idolatry because that person denies their own limitations in their attempt to play God.

When we forgive, we open our lives up grace. The only way to be opened to God's grace is to first realize "I too am a sinner." When we realize this, then we understand and know that we stand on the same level as our brother or sister. We are both equally in need of forgiveness. When we understand this we see that it is impossible to be open to God's grace and closed to our brother or sister at the same time.

The teacher must not judge others. If we as teachers are going to help others, then we ourselves must keep our life in rigorous self-examination. A teacher who is blind to her own faults can hardly help others to see theirs.

A tree is commonly judged by its product; but on the other hand, the quality of the tree

determines the kind of product. Deeds that are good and loving proceed from a generous, compassionate heart. The heart is the center of a person's intelligent, volitional, emotional being. If a person is not right at the center of their being, then her deeds are wrong from the source. Even so-called good acts can be wrong if they are done for the wrong reason.

WORK CITED:

NRSV Harper Study Bible. Trans. Harold Lindsell. Michigan: Zondervan, 1991.

The Broadman Bible Commentary. Trans. Clifton J. Allen. Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1970.