



Discussion Questions from Weekly Message

Feel free to customize this to use in your small group, family or for you personally

From Message on: 11/22/20

Optional Opener Question

What is the hardest class you've ever taken? What made it so hard? Did you have success or count yourself lucky to have survived?

Introductory Thought

Our new series is loosely based on Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, subtitled "Powerful lessons in Personal Change." To do that, BE PROACTIVE, BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND, FIRST THINGS FIRST. Build TRUST in relationships. THINK WIN-WIN. Next in line: SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND, THEN TO BE UNDERSTOOD.

Discussion Question

- Before you close out this session, finish by completing this sentence: **"To be a highly effective person, I need to seek first to understand, then to be understood and show it by...."**
- We use the word SEEK often when searching for buried treasure. How might that insight add to the discussion? Is it a passive verb or an active verb? Is the journey easy or hard? What makes us give up? Add Proverb 18:15 to the discussion.
- In what ways might the word THEN be a pivot word, changing the direction of the discussion or the argument?
- If listening precedes understanding, what do you think listening well means? What does it mean in marriage? In parenting? At work? Do you think listening and hearing are the same or different?
- Have you had people in your life that were exceptionally good listeners? What made them good? How did they make you feel? How might Matt 7:12 be an excellent rule for conversations?
- Read Prov 18:2. What mindset might be present that we think that our opinions count more? What part does just ol' bad habits play? What part does Pride play? Prov 18:12. Why do we rush to FIX before we've truly listened? How does pride make us quick to talk and slow to listen? What does James 1:19 say is the right order? **How might Psalms 141:3 be a transforming prayer?**
- Digging deeper: How might empathy be tied to understanding? Read Heb 4:15-16. Jesus models for us true empathy and understanding. How does this Scripture speak to that, and does it make you feel that He REALLY knows and understands what you're going through?
- Brent said: "We cannot expect to see God's power and blessing fully realized in our life until we trust Him." What do you think he meant by that? Matt 6:33. How might learning to trust God be like building our foundation on the rock instead of on sand? Matt 7:24-27
- Quote: "If we want influence to help others, we must first be influenced. We cannot give what we do not have or do not know." What are some of our major life influencers? Does it happen by osmosis or do I need to choose with intention? Add Prov 12:15 to the discussion. What warning does Scripture give in Acts 28:25-27?
- Question: "To be a highly effective person...." Effective at what?

Practical Application & Next Steps

- In the next seven days observe your interactions with others: give yourself a point for every time you paused and asked clarifying questions before you answered. Subtract a point for every time you assumed you knew what they were going to say and then started talking. Ask the Lord to remind you: "I care more about that person than I do airing my own opinions, even if I never get to speak." Read I Cor 13:1 – beautiful, perfect words are a poor substitute for real love. Being right doesn't matter if I destroy a relationship along the way.
- Are you willing to commit to greater growth in your relationship with God? "Seek first:" does this affect your daily schedule, your mindset, your habits, or your attitudes? Ask God to give you His grace for the journey: He doesn't want perfection, he wants permission.
- Call someone in the next seven days with the express purpose of listening. Let their conversation with you help them feel loved, valued and affirmed as they tell stories or just catch up with you.