

Session 8: Getting Below the Surface

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. Matthew 23:25-26

When we're dealing with people, how often do we focus our attention on the "outside of the cup" – the words they speak, their emotions or actions? Jesus seems to be telling us that we need to look deeper in order to discover what the real issue is and how best to walk alongside them. How we enter in with them and help them recognize and deal with issues is extremely important.

However, before we try to walk alongside others to help them look at the inside of their cup, we must consider the condition of the inside of our own cup. Where are you personally? Is your cup clean on the outside but dirty on the inside? Are you living an authentic gospel message or is yours more of a show for others to see?

It's important that we are continuously growing in our personal relationship with God and cooperating with the Holy Spirit in the process of becoming more like Christ. Otherwise, we'll be of little use to others.

In this session we'll be talking about looking below the surface and how this can help us be better facilitators, ministers, and disciple makers.

IMPORTANT: The skills we'll be discussing today can be effective inside the group, but for the most part **you will be using these skills outside the group – one-on-one with people.** You'll find that these skills will help you be much more effective in mentoring and ministering to others.

CHANGE FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Let's discuss why trying to clean the outside of the cup to make the inside clean doesn't work.

- Does behavior change lead to heart change or does heart change lead to behavior change? Why is this true?
- How effective is putting our energy into trying to correct behavior when the behavior is really generated by motives and core beliefs, principles, and values?

<u>CORE</u>	<u>MOTIVES</u>	<u>BEHAVIORS</u>
Beliefs	Purpose	Thoughts
Principles	Goals	Emotions
Values	Wants	Words/Actions

- So often we focus our attention on trying to change people's behavior rather than looking at the deeper issues. Discuss how focusing our attention and efforts on our core and allowing God to change us from the inside out produces radical life transformation and lasting change.

BLIND SPOTS

Describe the following (Johari Window):

HIDDEN	KNOWN
UNKNOWN	BLIND SPOTS

- The Hidden
 - Things about me that only I know. I hide them from others.
- The Known Things
 - Things I know about myself that others know as well.
- Unknown (Only God Knows)
 - Things only God knows about me (unknown to me and unknown to others).
- **Blind Spots**
 - Things others know about me that I'm not aware of myself.

Realizing that **others** have blind spots helps us more effectively minister to people in what ways?

- It helps us have compassion and understanding for others – they may not even realize they are doing something that is causing a problem (we can show empathy, grace, lack of judgment, etc.).
- It helps us come alongside others in a loving way to help them make positive change.

Knowing that **we ourselves** have blind spots helps us in what ways?

- It helps us realize how much we need the Holy Spirit and one another in the process of becoming more like Christ.
- It helps us desire feedback and ask others to speak into our lives.
- It helps us receive feedback from others—to realize they are trying to help us be better because they love us.
- It helps us accept the feedback of others and not argue or get upset.

- It promotes fellowship, relationship, and accountability.
- It models Christ-likeness and good leadership.

ACHIEVING TRUE UNDERSTANDING

Discuss the differences between the following:

- What's said.
 - What's said are the words we use to communicate a thought or idea.
- What's meant.
 - What's meant is the meaning behind the words (what we are trying to convey).
- What's heard.
 - What's heard is how the listener receives the words that are spoken. This involves their ability to listen, your ability to communicate, the filters they use to hear, their personal experiences, prejudices, emotions, etc.
- What's understood.
 - This is the final result of the communication. The problem is, the speaker and the listener can have two completely different understandings of what was communicated. They might even think they agree in their understandings, but don't.

When communicating with others, what helps us achieve true understanding?

- Seeking clarification as we communicate - Ask what the person heard, clarify their understanding of what is being communicated.
- Making sure we are using the same definition of terms.
 - Example: You are telling someone about a problem you are having with your computer mouse. Unfortunately, the entire time they think you are describing a problem you're having with a real mouse in your house.

VALUING PERSPECTIVES

Discuss the following regarding perspectives.

- In a room of ten people, how many perspectives are represented?
 - Everyone has their own perspective (10 people = 10 perspectives).
- How many of those perspectives are valid?
 - Don't confuse "valid" with "correct."
 - Someone's perspective is "valid" because it's what they believe – not necessarily because it's correct.
 - A person's perspective is no longer "valid" when they no longer believe it.

- If we choose to see other people's perspectives as always being valid (even when we disagree with them), how might that change how we communicate with them?

Compare and contrast the following two scenarios using the points below:

- Arguing with someone about the rightness or wrongness of their perspective.
- Considering a person's perspective as valid and asking them to help you understand why they hold that perspective.
 - Our emotion – how we feel, how we are reacting, what we are conveying.
 - Our physical presence – facial expressions, heartbeat, tone of voice, etc.
 - Our motivation – desire to be right versus desire to understand.
 - Our ability to cooperate with the Holy Spirit.
 - How they view us and our motivation.
 - How they respond to us.
 - Their ability to cooperate with the Holy Spirit.
 - The ultimate outcome – change of perspective, getting below the surface.
 - Our present relationship with them and continued relationship with them.

We are called to love others and build them up, not tear them down. Discuss why anger, hostility, and shame are ineffective means by which to change perspectives and win others to Christ.

GETTING TO THE BASEMENT

Discuss how an issue/problem/concern may not be the real or main issue at all.

- Often there is a deeper issue that is driving the surface level issue (remember our discussion on Core – Motives – Behaviors).
- This primary issue often can be traced to an issue between that person and God (crisis of belief, sin issue, holding back a part of their life from God, lack of trust, wrong application/understanding of Scripture, believing lies of the enemy, etc.).

Discuss the following statements:

- There is **always** a **why** that drives the **what**.
 - This simply means that there is always an underlying reason for what a person is sharing (issue/problem/action).

WHAT

WHY

- There is **often** a **lie** that drives the **why**.

- This means that the underlying reason for what a person is sharing is generated by something much deeper, and often it is a lie. **By “lie,” we mean a wrong belief or understanding of God and/or his word.**

WHY

LIE

- Example: “I’m having a hard time loving my wife in a way that honors God. This makes me feel like a failure as a husband and a Christian.” The **WHAT** is the man knows he isn’t loving his wife as God intends even though he is trying really hard. This is causing him to feel like a failure. The **WHY** is because he tries really hard but ends up blowing it because his wife didn’t respond in the way he wanted, or he had a bad day, etc. The **LIE** might be that the man thinks he can love his wife in the way God intends in his own power.
 - If we focused on the **WHAT**, we might simply give him encouragement.
 - If we focused on the **WHY**, we might give him tips and techniques on how to love his wife better or give him a book to read, etc.
 - If we focused on the possible **LIE**, we might point him to God’s word and help him to:
 - Challenge his core beliefs.
 - Identify the areas of his life he still needs to surrender to God.
 - Allow God to change him rather than him trying harder to change himself or his wife.
 - Be led by and controlled by the Holy Spirit.
 - Understand what love is and its source.
- In dealing with others, do you think you primarily focus on the surface issue/problem/action (the **WHAT** and/or the **WHY**), or are you intentional in taking people deep—to investigate if there is an underlying lie at the core?
- What can happen when we focus our attention only on the outside of the cup (the surface-level issue) and don’t get down to the primary/spiritual issues?
 - People don’t understand the disconnect (relational separation) between themselves and God.
 - People don’t experience lasting change.
 - They can become defeated and give up.
 - It can cause problems relationally (relational separation) between themselves and others.

THINGS TO CONSIDER - GETTING TO THE BASEMENT

- Journeying with people in this way—getting to the deeper things—is like walking them down the rungs of a ladder. Discuss the following in this regard.

- How and why might they react as you help them down the ladder?
 - Change is difficult.
 - As they discover truth, they can have all kinds of emotions: guilt, fear, grief, anger, disappointment, regret, panic, etc.
 - People move at different speeds.
 - When you move someone down the ladder too quickly, they will become overwhelmed and often will react emotionally—lash out or shut down.
 - Understanding this helps us to respond appropriately; don't be surprised, be curious.
 - This process can also cause us to be emotional—especially when we don't have the answers or don't even know what the lie really is (fear, feelings of inadequacy, etc.).
- Providing clarity versus providing the solutions.
 - Help them understand their motivations.
 - Help them see the perspective of others.
 - It's very important that we do not play the role of the Holy Spirit.
 - Our part is really to help people identify core issues—things that separate them from God.
 - We can help them walk down the ladder to the basement to investigate and uncover the lies.
 - We can help them look to God's word for help and direction.
 - Our job isn't to have the solution, but to direct them to the One who does.
 - Lasting change – transformation is really between them and God.
 - Don't try to do the other person's part or God's part.
- Have you ever talked yourself out of trying to help someone go deep?
 - If so, what excuses (or permissions) have you given yourself?
 - When you get right down to it, were these excuses for your benefit or for the benefit of the other person? (Who were you really caring about—them or yourself?)
- In the past, what has been your biggest obstacle in looking below the surface and walking people “down the ladder” to help them discover the deeper issues?

WRAP-UP

- Practical Application
 - Valuing feedback: Do you value people speaking into your life? If this is a value of yours, you would routinely ask for it. You'd receive it. You'd make positive change based on it. Reflect on your willingness to allow others to speak into your life. What's getting in the way? What are some specific ways you can grow in this area? Who will you ask to help you?
 - Perspective: This week as you interact with others, try to discover if you really value the perspective of others. Do you try to understand them so you can help get to the deeper issue and find real healing, or do you typically argue the surface level issues—the validity of their perspective?

- Behavior versus Core: This week, be intentional in noticing how many times your first reaction is to focus on or attempt to change the behaviors of others, rather than trying to get to the deeper core issue.
- Evaluate: Where are you personally? Is your cup clean on the outside but dirty on the inside? Are you living an authentic gospel message or is yours more of a show for others to see?
- Reflect: Spend time reflecting on your relationships with others and how you typically respond and interact with them. What change does God want you to make? What do you intentionally need to do to actually bring about this change? What role does God play in this?
- Self-Practice: Take an issue you're struggling with and spend time going through the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12).
 - Go slowly and take one at a time.
 - What do each mean and how do they relate to you and the issue you're dealing with?
 - As you move through these profound teachings of Jesus, ask yourself questions that challenge you at your core and help uncover things in your basement—things that are keeping you from believing or applying God's word in your life as it relates to this issue.
 - You might find you've been seeing the problem from a motivation or behavior perspective, rather than attacking it at the core.
 - What is God asking you to do? What do you need to surrender to God?
 - What was this process like for you? What did you learn? How can you use this in ministering to others?

Application Questions:

1. Does behavior change lead to heart change, or does heart change lead to behavior change? Why is this true?
2. If we choose to see other people's perspectives as always being valid (even when we don't agree), how might that change how we communicate with them?
3. In the Getting to the Basement section of session 8, we learned about the What, the Why and the Lie in understanding the deeper issue that often drives a surface level behavior. In dealing with others, do you primarily focus on the surface issue/problem (the What and/or the Why), or are you intentional in taking people deep to investigate the underlying issue (the Lie) at the core? What's been an obstacle that has kept you from going deeper with people?