

BECOME MORE SELF AWARE

DATE: SUNDAY, 9TH OF AUGUST 2020 | SERIES: RELATIONSHIP GOALS - PART 3

MATTHEW 7:4-5

How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

NOTE TO LEADERS:

The aim of this series is to improve our relationships across the board - from colleagues to children to neighbours to spouse.

START TALKING

1. What is one comment that stood out to you from this week's interview?
2. List two adjectives that describe your favourite animal (without naming the animal). Can the group guess your favourite animal based on these adjectives?

START THINKING

1. Read Matthew 7:4-5. What do you think Jesus means by "plank in your own eye"? What do you think prevents us from seeing the "plank" in our own eye?
2. Read Proverbs 21:2. How do people tend to view their own conduct? What ultimately determines what is right or wrong.

START SHARING

1. In Proverbs 15:1, we read that a gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Why would a "gentle answer turn away wrath?" Give an example of a situation where you could have given a "harsh answer" but instead dealt with someone gently. How did it impact the other person's reaction/response? How did it impact your relationship with that person?
2. Graham gave six points on how we develop self-awareness:
 - a). Get feedback
 - b). Notice how people respond to you
 - c). Process your thoughts and prayers through journaling
 - d). Listen to yourself
 - e). Personality profiles
 - f). Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a healthy perspective on yourself
 Which of these do you currently do? Which of these do you consider the most difficult to do? What are you

going to do first to start developing your self-awareness?

3. What are your takeaways from this week's message? What do you feel that God wants you to do with this information? How are you going to apply it in daily life?

START PRAYING

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24)

START DOING

This week's goal is to become more self-aware. Proverbs 27:17 tells us that As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. This week ask three friends/family members/colleagues to hold the mirror up to you by asking these two simple questions:

1. "What have I done well?"
2. "What could I be doing better?"

SUMMARY

OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

This Sunday, Steve interviewed Graham Kiggan - an executive coach and elder on the CityHill leadership team - about how we can become more self-aware. Many of us have wondered how we could be more effective. More effective as a leader, as a parent, as a Life Group member or simply as a community member.

Not only do we worry about being more effective, but sometimes we note a pattern to the way people behave around us. Some of the questions we may ask ourselves are, "why do people take advantage of me?"; "why do people ignore me?"; "why do people get angry with me?". But we need to ask ourselves the question, "what am I doing to create this problem?" We know from coaching and psychological research that we get back what we give out. So people respond to our behaviour or the spirit that we act from. If we are stubborn or obstinate, then people may get angry with us. If we're always negative or very needy, then people start to avoid us...

Matthew 12:34 says: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (ESV). Do you know what's in your heart? Do you know what you sound like to other people? Are there any blind spots? We all have blind spots, but how big are they and are we on a journey to uncover them?

1. What is self-awareness?

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart. Proverbs 21:2 (ESV). People don't weigh our hearts; God does. But they do weigh our actions and how we make them feel.

Self-awareness is the cornerstone of our EQ (Emotional Quotient, i.e. Emotional Intelligence). The other components of EQ are Social Awareness and Self-Management (self-control).

Self-awareness is the ability to understand what we are feeling and why; as well as to understand, in an objective way, what caused those feelings. It enables us to connect with our underlying beliefs, assumptions and values and to know what drives us and what triggers us. It is the ability to walk into a room of people and understand what we are feeling and why. Not only that, but also to understand what is happening to the people in the room at an emotional level and then to respond appropriately. So self-awareness provides the springboard for connecting with others - which creates the base for being able to negotiate, teach, influence and lead.

2. To respond appropriately

Our emotions are good and God-given, and we should not deny them. A high level of self-awareness allows us to acknowledge the emotion in ourselves and others that we may be interacting with, and then to respond appropriately.

In Proverbs 15:1, we read that *a gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.* (NIV). If we encounter a case of abuse - either verbal or physical - we are angry and rightly so. But shouting or threatening may not solve the problem. What would the correct line of action be? To manage our emotions so that we can consider, and

work towards, the outcome that best serves the situation and brings justice. The question to ask is "How can I bring life to this situation?" The better we know ourselves and our tendencies to miss the "plank in our own eye", the clearer we can see where we need to grow as followers of Christ and to respond appropriately as we interact with people on a daily basis.

3. How do we develop self-awareness?

a. Get feedback.

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17 Let friends/colleagues hold the mirror up to you. 360-degree feedback is a useful tool, not just in business, but even as individuals. We can ask others these simple questions "what have I done well?" and "what could I be doing better?"

b. Notice how people respond to you.

Is there a pattern with how people respond to us? We can then ask ourselves - "what am I doing that is causing that response in them?" We can then work on changing it.

c. Process your thoughts and prayers through journaling.

Journaling is not always a favourite, but it does help us process the events and thoughts in our lives. It is a reflective practice which is the way adults learn. It is also a history of our journey, and we get value as we allow ourselves to see our history from a new perspective. (If you find journaling difficult, try doing it weekly rather than daily.)

d. Listen to yourself.

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" Matthew 12:34. What do you talk about? At this time of COVID, we can become very negative when talking to friends and neighbours. What we are saying is a clue to what is happening inside of us and the stress and anxiety that we are all feeling at this time.

e. Personality profiles.

There are many personality profiles out there, and all have some merit and may give us insight into our values and behaviour. A good one to use, which is available free online, is the Romans 12 grace gifts. There is a lot written online about this personality profile and each of the seven grace gifts or types. The key here would be to discuss the profile with your spouse or a friend.

f. Don't be afraid to ask the Holy Spirit to give you a healthy perspective on yourself.

Then don't get defensive when He does! Wrestling with our weaknesses, strengths, temptations, and emotions helps to grow our self-awareness and to better serve in the Kingdom.