

Cultivating Great Relationships: Affirming the Best

Core Group Discussion Guide

04-30-2017

Message Overview:

The bad news is that we are all broken, but the great news of Jesus is that he can heal us. One of the most powerful principles in our quest to cultivate great relationships is to learn to believe the good news about other people. It is easy to be overwhelmed with the reality that we are all broken and that people do horrible things that hurt others. However, when we live with this view in the front seat of our mind, it is difficult to trust, love, and affirm the good in others and healthy relationships are nearly impossible. In Paul's letter to Philemon, we see that Paul views Philemon as someone that Jesus is transforming and, thus, Philemon has all kinds of traits Paul can affirm. To develop great relationships, it is critical for us to look for the good in others and affirm it. People who consistently see the bad in others, push them away and have difficulty building healthy life giving relationships. In our Core Group discussions, we will look at how to overcome the tendency toward criticism and enhance our ability to encourage.

Text:

- Philemon 4-7
- Proverbs 18:21, Proverbs 15:4, Proverbs 12:25
- Matthew 12:36
- I Thess. 5:11

Questions for Discussion:

1. Open the Core Group time by discussing what stood out to them from the message.
2. How would you describe the difference between a critical spirit and constructive criticism?
3. Read Romans 14:1-12 – After reading this passage, how would you describe a critical spirit?
4. How do we often justify having a critical spirit?
5. How does a critical spirit damage our relationships with others?
6. Read Romans 15:1-7 – Based on these verses, what practical changes in perspective are we called too if we struggle with a critical spirit?
7. If we are someone who has the gift of discernment and can see problems others cannot, how do we share those concerns in a way that doesn't destroy or harm others?
8. (Activity) Pass out 3x5 notecards to everyone in the room. Ask that they write a note of appreciation to someone else in the congregation and after Sunday School place it in their mailbox.