

MATTHEW 1:2-6

ICE BREAKER

Question: Tell us about something that you tried to hide when you were growing up. Was there something you did that you didn't want your parents to find out about? Was there some personality quirk that you didn't want your friends to know? Was there a movie, television show, or some type of music that you were embarrassed about?

CENTERING FOCUS

**My shortcomings, my brokenness, and my weaknesses don't embarrass God; they are exactly what qualify me for God's love and grace.*

Take time as a group to be silent and listen to the song "Be Still and Know" from the album "Scripture Lullabies: Hidden in My Heart (A Lullaby Journey Through Scripture)"

The point of this is to take time to allow the Spirit of God to care for the worries, concerns, anxieties, and responsibilities that are clouding your mind.

LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Spend 15 minutes practicing the disciplines of silence and solitude each day this week.

Question: Did this practice becoming easier for you as the week went on or did it become more difficult?

Question: Were you able to identify any unnecessary activities that you might be able to reprioritize as to make more time for practicing silence?

Question: Did anyone practice journaling after spending time in silence? If so how did it go?

THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTION

Question: Have you ever been in a situation where you either overheard someone talking about you, or thought someone was talking about you? Did you say anything? How did it make you feel?

Question: What does it do to someone when they feel like someone else is embarrassed to be seen with them or associated with them?

ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 2:11 (NIV): Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So, Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

The word "holy" means to be made suitable for God's purposes. This is someone who has been consecrated, dedicated, or sanctified.

Question: Who is the one who makes us holy?

Question: Does Jesus search out and find people who are already holy and invite them into his family or does Jesus invite broken people into his family and make those broken people holy?

Question: Have you ever felt ashamed about something you've done, something you've said, or something you've thought? When you think about the perfection of Jesus, when you think about his righteousness, and you compare it to those things that you've ashamed of, is it difficult to imagine that Jesus is NOT ashamed to call you his family?

Romans 8:1 (ESV): There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Question: In your own words how would you define condemnation? (You may need to look it up)

Question: Is there a word that the apostle Paul use in Romans 8:1 that gives you hope for today? How does the word "now" change your view of the promise of "no condemnation?"

Hebrews 8:12 (ESV): For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

Question: Think about the first sinful thing you remember doing. How many years ago was that?

Question: According to Hebrews how long will God remember or keep bringing up our sins?

Question: God chooses not to remember our sins. He chooses never to bring them up again. He doesn't forget because He cannot, but because he chooses not to remember them. Why do you think he does this?

Question: When Matthew is writing Jesus' genealogy he chooses to include Tamar who committed incest with her father in law, Rahab who was a prostitute, and Bathsheba who committed adultery with king David. If God wasn't ashamed to include these women in his genealogy do you think he would be ashamed to include you? How does that make you feel?

COMMUNAL RESPONSE

Let's go around the room and list out as many things as we can that we are thankful to God for...

NEW CHALLENGE

Most followers of Jesus pray before they eat. This week take 2-5 minutes before each meal to be silent and focus your attention on Jesus before you begin to say your prayer. If you're with your family invite them to participate with you. If you're with friends or coworkers invite them to join you—this could be a great opportunity to help experience the benefits of quieting their mind.