

**Different
Small Group Questions
10.7.18**

Getting Started:

In our time together we focus on Paul's warning against hypocrisy (vs.9). The word "hypocrite" was sometimes used in Bible times in a positive way of actors. Who are some of your favorite actors/actresses (hypocrites!) today?

Digging Deeper:

The Big Idea: Sometimes we do kind things for other more for ourselves than for them. Our passage says that when we do this we are being fake. Having just told us that God gives us special gifts (vss.3-8), Paul stresses that we learn to use those gifts as authentic expressions of love for people.

Read Romans 12:3-10

1) The ESV translates verse 9, "Let love be genuine." What are some other translations of this verse?

2) The word "genuine" means something like this in the Greek: *non-hypocritical*.

a) When someone says, "stop being a hypocrite," what kinds of behavior are usually being referred to?

b) A hypocrite is someone who pretends to be something on the outside that they aren't on the inside. What are some situations when it is actually noble to be a "hypocrite?"

3) When Paul warns against hypocrisy, the immediate concern is with how we use our spiritual gifts.

a) Review what we discussed last week about spiritual gifts.

b) Pastor Jake said that spiritual gifts are inherently designed to focus on others. Each one of them is like a Valentine Candy Heart that says "I love YOU!" Go through the list in Romans 12:6-8 and talk about how each gift, when in action, is a tangible way of saying, "I love you!"

4) What Paul means by hypocrisy here is this: Though you are saying "I love you" on the outside with the use of your gift, what you are really saying on the inside is "I love ME!"

a) Go through the list in Romans 12:6-8 again and talk about how we can make each of these gifts about us instead of others.

b) Compare this passage with 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:13. What does Paul add to his description of self-centered gifts?

5) We are not always aware when we've made our gifts more about us than others. Discuss some subtle clues in our hearts that tell us we have made a gift more about us than others (e.g., when we feel jealous of people who have a similar gift getting recognized for their service).

Making It Real:

6) Self-centeredness is the sin beneath all of our sins. It is a powerful force in our hearts that will bend and twist everything to serve us. In our passage, Paul offers a number of truths to help us trade this self-love for genuine love. Take time as a group and look at some of these considerations.

a) Verse 3 - Each gift that we have is given to us out of pure grace. We don't deserve them; they are not rewards for being better than others. Why we have the gifts we do has nothing to do with us.

b) Verse 4 - Our gifts cannot exist without others. We are completely interdependent, like a part of the body is dependent upon the rest of the body.

c) Verses 1-2 - We are called to crawl daily on the altar with our gifts and inferior motives and pray that God would burn up self-centeredness and kindle authentic love for people and Him.

d) Verse 1 - Behold Jesus (who has all gifts) using those gifts to crawl onto the altar (the cross) to save us. His love is the most genuine.

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