



03.SEEING OTHERS CLEARLY

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

GOAL:

The goal of this lesson is twofold:

1. *This small group lesson is designed to help you and your students go deeper into how we view others incorrectly.*
Through an interactive activity, students will learn the importance of not judging or assuming things about people. God views everyone as equally sinful and equally deserving of grace. The way God has mercifully treated us should affect the ways we treat those around us.
2. *It is also designed to make it easy for you to facilitate and teach students that we're all on equal ground before God.*
That is why the Small Group Leader Guide is packed with easy-to-use instructions, timeframes, and questions that promote thinking and draw out real responses.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- A copy of the Small Group Leader Guide for you and any other facilitators.
- A Student Book for each participant.
- Be sure to check out the Live It Out section ahead of time to prepare. You'll need:
 - *a small present or treat for each student (get the exact same thing for each person); disguise/wrap these gifts differently, ranging in size and appeal; some may be stapled in a paper bag, others may have a fancy bow; some may be in a big box, some small, etc.*
 - *pieces of paper with numbers one through however many students you have*
 - *a bowl*

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Don't forget to take a minute and watch the teacher prep video found in your DNow Studies account. It's a short video that will take you through some of the need-to-knows before you dive into this lesson with students.

WHAT'S INCLUDED: Small Group Leader Guide or Student Book

This table outlines the parts of each lesson and provides an approximate timeframe that you can adapt to meet the needs of your group.

Lesson Elements (and brief description)	Included in Small Group Leader Guide	Included in Student Book	Approximate Timeframe
LARGE GROUP TALK REVIEW W/OPENING QUESTIONS Recap the teaching. Get discussion going by sharing answers from the end of the Large Group Talk.	✓	✓	3–5 minutes
A SECOND LOOK A look at seeing clearly in current, everyday life—followed by discussion questions.	✓	✓	10–15 minutes
A LITTLE DEEPER Dig into Bible passages that were not in the Large Group Talk. See what else Scripture says about this topic.	✓	✓	10–15 minutes
LIVE IT OUT An experiential activity to help students reinforce and internalize the lesson—followed by discussion questions.	✓		15–20 minutes
APPLY IT A practical application for students to do this week.	✓	✓	2–3 minutes
STUDENT DEVOTIONAL A short devotional for students to do on their own.		✓	

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SMALL GROUP SESSION THREE: SEEING OTHERS CLEARLY

LARGE GROUP TALK REVIEW

Take a minute to review what students just learned in the Large Group Talk. Have them pull out their notes, and ask them to share what their answers were for the two questions found on **page 20** of the Student Book (see below). Consider having students share their answers with a partner, and then ask for two or three volunteers who might want to share with the whole group.

Question 1: In what ways have you experienced God's compassion, love, and mercy?

Question 2: How have you been convicted about your judgments toward others? What specifically can you work on in terms of how you think of others and their "level of deserving"?

A SECOND LOOK

*Read this story together and answer the following questions, found on **page 22** of the Student Book.*

You've probably been in this scenario: You're in gym class, and it's time to pick teams. The two team captains go back and forth and pick who they want. Most likely, the popular kids will be chosen first—regardless of whether they are good at the sport or not—and the less-popular kids will be chosen last. Perhaps some are chosen last because they are quiet or non-athletic. As you observe the picking and choosing, you can almost guess who the captains are going to pick next based on what everyone thinks of those remaining. We so often play favorites—not only when it comes to sports, but life in general. It's easy to pick the "best" people, but often, we don't really know who those people are because we're judging them from the outside. We just see them through our filters, not through God's. Thankfully, God sees each person's heart and knows who has trusted in him as Savior and who hasn't. He doesn't judge based on looks or ability or popularity. In his grace and sovereignty, he is the perfect judge who chooses some to be his children without partiality (Rom. 2:11).

Discuss:

- When have you played favorites and what influenced your decision in this scenario?
- How could you have changed that situation and shown God's love, compassion, and mercy?
- Why do you think viewing others the way God does is so important?
- Explain in your own words how God's kingdom works differently than the way we often operate.

A LITTLE DEEPER

Now we understand that our view of others is often distorted because we judge others based on what we see through our own filters. We like to place them on a "scale" of how good they are and then compare ourselves to those around us. But God sees us all as sinners in need of a Savior, Jesus Christ. And because he is the perfect judge, he shows compassion, mercy, and love to all his children. Let's dive into three passages that reinforce these ideas.

Read each Bible passage and answer the questions, found in the Student Book on pages 23 and 24:

ROMANS 9:15-16

"For he says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy."

Background Note: In Exodus 33, God says these words to Moses as a reminder of His glory and goodness. Thankfully, God's character never changes. He is perfect and holy and wise and therefore, judges everyone perfectly. To be his child, we don't need to pass a test or earn his favor. He shows mercy to those he chooses. We don't know exactly why he chooses some and not others, but if we are his children, we have much to praise him for.

Discuss:

- What do you see about God's character in this passage?
- Does the fact that God has the sovereign power to show mercy and compassion on whoever he wants concern you or comfort you? Why?
- What would happen if God's mercy and compassion depended on us instead of him?

JAMES 2:1-4

"My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, 'You sit here in a good place,' while you say to the poor man, 'You stand over there,' or, 'Sit down at my feet,' have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?"

Background Note: The world operates very differently than God does. The world likes to choose some and not others based on their own filters. But the filters aren't accurate because each human is sinful, unlike God! Even the early church struggled with playing favorites. James was writing to remind them of the truth that partiality has no place in God's Kingdom.

Discuss:

- When have you been in or heard of a situation similar to this passage? What happened?
- How does operating within our own filters harm our relationships?
- Do you need to confess your own judgments of others and evil thoughts? Take time to do so now.

ROMANS 15:7

"Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."

Background Note: God welcomes each of his children into his family with open arms because of Christ's payment for our sin on the cross. He sees Christ's righteousness instead of our sin. His love, compassion, and mercy are evident in the way he treats his children, and that is exactly what we are to do as well. What a great opportunity to show others God's character by the way we treat them!

Discuss:

- How does welcoming others in a Christ-honoring way glorify God?
- Explain in your own words how Christ has welcomed you into his family.
- How can you welcome others into the family of God?

LIVE IT OUT: Grab Bag

What you'll need: a small present or treat for each student (get the exact same thing for each person); disguise/wrap these gifts differently, ranging in size and appeal; some may be stapled in a paper bag, others may have a fancy bow; some may be in a big box, some small, etc.; pieces of paper with numbers one through however many students you have; a bowl

Say Something Like: *When we look at others, we often see just the outside of a person and judge them based on what we see and observe. However, when God sees humanity, he sees sinners—we all look the same. But in his grace, he chooses to show his compassion, love, and mercy toward us. And because of that, we are equally loved in God's eyes!*

Instructions:

1. Place all the gifts in a pile in the middle of the students and ask them not to touch any of them.
2. Have each student pick a number out of the bowl. (This will determine the order of who chooses a gift first, second, third, etc.)
3. Have the students start picking out their gifts in order, without opening them.
4. As each student picks out a gift, **Say something like:** *We look at other people based on what they look like, how popular they are, how smart they seem to be, and many other factors. Just like these gifts, we determine (through our faulty filters) which gift is better or worse based on what the package looks like.*
5. Now ask the students to open their gifts at the same time. **Say something like:** *God does not judge others based on what they're wearing or their status in society like we do. He sees us all the same! Once we are his children, he sees Christ's righteousness instead of our sin and is delighted to show us his mercy, compassion, and love. We are equally loved in God's eyes.*

Debrief:

- What did you think about the gifts before they were opened? How did you choose the gift that you chose?
- Did you see a pattern or trend of which gift was picked first, second, third, etc.?
- How would people live differently if they believed that they could earn favor with God like we try to earn favor with others?
- Why is it important that God's filter is perfect, seeing his children as all equally deserving of heaven?

APPLY IT

Identify one way you can change how you treat others this week that would reflect the way Christ has treated you.

Be specific:

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

Leader's Note: *Whenever students make applications, challenge them to be specific. It's one thing to say, "I'm going to trust God more." The truth is, our students won't really know if they did this, or if they grew in trust over the week. It's another thing to say, "Every morning this week before I eat breakfast, I'm going to tell God that today is his and that I trust him, and I'm going to ask him to give me the strength to replace worries with trust." Challenge your students to answer the questions under the "Be Specific" section. You can even have them pair up, share their applications, and ask for accountability from their partner.*

WHAT'S NEXT?

Schedule: Let students know what's happening next in the schedule and what they need to do or bring with them.

Student Devotional: The Student Book contains a short devotional for students to do on their own. Remember to point this out to students and let them know if and when this fits into the schedule of the weekend. The devotional that corresponds with this lesson is found on **page 39**.