

(Simple advice: If you're new to these notes, here's my advice: **Do not be overwhelmed by these notes as another "home school" assignment, or even that you need to "do" all or any of this outline!** This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**) The following ice breaker is just a starter for your group. The message comes after the second bar. Please enjoy!)

**CROWD BREAKER: Think back to your graduation from high school. What do you remember? What was cool in that day? What was new? What was old fogey untouchable that you enjoy today?**

**Do you have a testimony from this week? —The scribe**

Note: Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. Remember the purpose is to unite, not divide; to fearlessly proclaim the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories on Sunday that will serve for a long time.** REMEMBER TO BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. It's a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

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Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions raised by Pastor Mark's message this Sunday. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **Remember the purpose is to minister to one another.**

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Pastor Richie: "You can go without food for two to three months. You can go without water for two to three days. You can go without breathing for two to three minutes" **...How long can you go without the Lord?**

**Are you judgmental? To what degree? Do you draw conclusions about people? Do you question motives? Are you critical? Negative? Do you create narratives? How often do you talk about people?**

**Can you think of anyone who does? Can you name names? How do you judge them?**

Mark says, "This is ingrained in us. We're trained to be 'critical thinkers.' But our 'critical thinking' makes us critical of others." **Is this true? How is it ingrained?**

"Christians as a whole are said to be judgmental." **Do you think so? Why? What makes us judgmental? Is it easier to judge others? What makes it easier?**

**Look at Romans 2:**

*1*You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on another. For on whatever grounds you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. *2*And we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. *3*So when you, O man, pass judgment on others, yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? *4*Or do you disregard the riches of His kindness, tolerance, and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you to repentance? **Talk about this. How does this speak to judgment? Think of what Jesus said: "Why do you seek to take the speck out of your brother's eye, and you do not see the beam in your own eye?" How does this apply? What is the "speck" here? And what is the "beam"?**

**Think in terms of what we were judging in Romans 1? Do you remember? (Look back to Romans 1 to see that indictment.) Jesus goes on, "You must first take the beam out of your own eye. Then you can see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." How does this apply?**

**Look at this:**

*5*But because of your hard and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

**Does God judge? What does God judge? How is wrath revealed? (Think again of last week, Romans 1..." The wrath of God is revealed..." ) Is Paul saying the mind goes first?**

*6*God "will repay each one according to his deeds." *7*To those who by perseverance in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality, He will give eternal life. *8*But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow wickedness, there will be wrath and anger.

*9*There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil, first for the Jew, then for the Greek; *10*but glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does good, first for the Jew, then for the Greek. *11*For God does not show favoritism. **Look at verse 7: What are we**

**seeking? How do we seek it? What happens when this is not what we're seeking? How can you tell the difference between each? Mark says, "God looks at the heart, and we look at the outward appearance." How does this fit? How do you 'take time to see what is in others' hearts'? How, when we 'judge others' are we actually 'condemning ourselves', as Paul said in verse 1?**

**What is the "Law of Reciprocity"? (Whatever you sow you will also reap.) How does it work? What happens to you when you're judging others? Why is it hard to be righteous before God and judgmental of everything that is going on? Mark says, "People need to feel the love of God without the judgment." Does that eliminate the judgment? Who will do it if you do not? Who should do it? Who was sent "to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment?" (John 16:8) Have you seen how this works? Do you have a testimony?**

**How did Jesus judge the woman caught in adultery? How did Jesus judge the woman at the well who had five husbands and was not married to the one she was living with?**

**Look up Matthew 7:1 "Do not judge, or you will be judged. 2For with the same judgment you pronounce, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. How does this illustrate the Law of Reciprocity?**

**3Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but fail to notice the beam in your own eye? 4How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while there is still a beam in your own eye? 5You hypocrite! First take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. Does Jesus say, "Do not judge at all?" What MUST come first? How do you KNOW when the beam is gone from your own eye?**

**Paul spoke in verse 7 of"7To those who by perseverance in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality," What do we seek first? Whose glory? Whose honor?**

**12All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. 13For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but it is the doers of the law who will be declared righteous. What is the difference between a hearer and a doer? What does the "doer" do when his neighbor falls down?**

**How does, "Confess your sins one to another" help to avoid judgmentalism? What does it add to a relationship? Talk about "transparency." How does it help?**

**What is God doing? Where is Jesus as we come out of COVID? Is God speaking to us? What is He saying? Mark says, "I believe Jesus is saying, 'I have so much more for you. I have things in store for you.' There are so many people we can disagree with...so much politics we can judge." What is the profit from disagreement and judgment?**

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***This week, begin to steward your heart and mind. Become aware of your tone and your talk. Discover why you went into "negative mode." God Help me speak life? Let God do the judging.***

***How concerned should we be that others have a relationship with Jesus? What do you do when you are concerned for your neighbor?***

***Follow the truth wherever it leads you. What is the next step? Take time to share. Talk about your biggest takeaway.***

***Take time to pray for one another. Be blessed. –the scribe***