

Sermon Based Small Group Guide for March 5, 2023 sermon:
"Outside-in or Inside-out?"

Warm up:

1. Most diets that people go on to lose weight take the "outside-in" approach. "Eat these FOODS, in these QUANTITIES, this OFTEN." Some of the newer weight loss programs (Apps) actually help a person try to understand WHY they WANT to eat certain things at certain times. Which seems most effective/helpful to you?
2. If you were raised in a more conservative/fundamental religious environment, you probably remember the list of things a "good Christian" didn't do. Name some of the externals you were told to avoid as a Christian then answer this question as honestly as you can: Did trying to follow those rules make the temptations or desires go away?

Digging deeper: (20-30 minutes)

1. ASK: What is the role (or purpose) of the Laws, regulations and standards that God gave to His people?
All of us are good at justifying ourselves...explaining why what we do is right and how what other people do is wrong. The person who drives faster than us is a "maniac" and the senior citizen driving too slow is a "hazard". The person who spends more money than me is "irresponsible" and the one who spends less is a "tightwad"...but I'm just right! Read Romans 3:9-20. What, according to Paul (especially verses 19-20) is THE point of the Law? Read Romans 3:21-22. What is the only solution to our sin problem? What clarity does Galatians 3:10-12 add to this?

2. ASK: What do you think is the most obvious indication that someone is truly right with God and growing in relationship with Him? Why is it tempting to look at the person who has the most rigid and self-limiting lifestyle as "obviously" the person who is most pleasing to God?

In the Apostle Paul's day, and still today, there are people who do a great job of keeping a bunch of strict religious standards, and they point to keeping those standards as proof that God is pleased with them.

Read Colossians 2:16-23 and answer the following questions:

- How did all the Old Testament rituals and festivals find their fulfillment in Jesus?
- Why is pride and arrogance about "how righteous" someone is actually proof that their confidence is in the wrong things?
- Being narrow, tough, rigid on ourselves "makes sense" to us sometimes, it seems like it would help us defeat sin. Why, according to v.23, doesn't this really work?

Apply it: (10 minutes)

The goal is to honor God with our motives and our actions. This would be a great night to share any insights that you've learned that have helped your Christian walk with your small group. Is there anyone who needs encouragement tonight? Pray for them!