



We Are For People | Ethan Matott | 6.13.21
Weekly Study

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

What is the most inspiring conversation you have had in the last three months?

SHARE

Welcome to week three of our series We Are _____. In this collection of talks, we are talking about who we are. We always want to figure out what we are supposed to do, but the truth is, if we know who we are, we will know what to do! But before we dive into the sermon, take some time to check in with your Group by answering these questions.

Rate your week on a scale of 1 to 10. Why did you pick that number?

What was the highlight of your week? What was the most challenging part of your week?

What was the most inspirational conversation you had this week?

For a lot of you, this is your very first time meeting as a Group. If this is one of your first meetings, we want to give you all a chance to get to know each other a little more by sharing your life story. Although this can be scary, it is one of the most fruitful things your Group can do. Pick two-three people from your Group this week and have them answer the following questions.

1. Tell me about your upbringing. What are a few of the significant life events that shaped and molded you?
2. Have you ever had a moment where you realized God is real and loves you? If so, tell us about it.
3. How have you changed in the last five years?
4. Describe yourself in five words and explain why you picked each one.
5. Who is God to you?

Every person has a unique journey they have been on that has led them to this point. Taking the time to share your story is a fantastic exercise for you and for everyone listening!

G R O W

Read Matthew 5:43-48

Is it hard for you to love your enemies? Why or why not?

What do you think Jesus means when he says to be perfect?

“...He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” Matthew 5:45

The greatest commandment is to love God and to love your neighbors. Who is your neighbor? Everyone. We are all created by God, and no matter what you think of someone, you are called by God to love them. We are all sinners and fall short, and it is possible to hate the sin and love your neighbor as yourself.

As Ethan said in his sermon, we usually have a circle of people who we are comfortable with. To truly love your neighbors, you have to expand beyond your circle of people by extending invitation to people who think, vote, and look different than you. We are all created in God's image; wouldn't it be great to include as many unique people in your circle who reflect him differently than you.

How can you do this? Suggestions: Learn someone's story who is out of your circle by inviting them to lunch. Joining this small group was a huge first step! Don't be afraid to not only be vulnerable enough to share your story but lean in and listen to other stories in your Group.

Who have you unfairly left out of your circle? Why?

M O V E

Mathew 9:9-13

What does Jesus mean when he says, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." ?

Jesus is for all people. It was more important to him that he spend time with those who are not living by religion and laws. Those who society viewed as sinners whether by lifestyles or occupation. Gathering from this passage, it is clear that Jesus intentionally spent time with those who were outside of the "Christian circle."

The tax collectors and sinners were friends with Jesus. Staying within the small circle that exists in many Christian communities was not Jesus's mission and is still not his mission.

Jesus says in Matthew 9 verse 12, "that it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick." Jesus is implying that it is not beneficial to only love people who are striving to live apart from sin. It is to spread love and make that circle as big as possible so that we can all live in freedom from sin.

Jesus calls the sinners, not the righteous. The way to righteousness is to turn away from sin, so why not keep inviting people into that freedom that is so graciously offered? The Pharisees criticized Jesus and his disciples for hanging out with those who are living in sin, but they did not grasp what Jesus was doing. This is still true today, as we can often find ourselves judging others for the way they are living when we have an opportunity to be a part of true life change for the Kingdom of God.

There is so much life and opportunity found in getting outside of the Christian circle and viewing people as people, not people against us. It's very difficult for people to be reached if we aren't willing to extend the reach. Jesus is for people, and we as followers of him, are to be for people too, all people.

Have you ever been criticized for hanging out with people who lived differently than you?

This week how can you expand your circle? Share with your group one practical way to expand the Christian circle as Jesus did in Matthew 9:9-13

P R A Y

We need prayer now more than ever. Spend some time-sharing prayer requests. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking off into two separate groups (or calls if you are an online group) to share more freely.

T O G O

The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

- Mark 12:31