



NT Group Sermon Study

I'm WITH Stupid

January 10, 2016

Break the Ice:

(A key part of healthy group life is to make sure your group gets to know each other and builds good relationship.)

- Describe a difficult teacher you had in elementary, Jr. High or High school. What made this teacher difficult?

As very young children we all learn quickly that there are people in our lives who are difficult to get along with. No matter what we do, this person just seems impossible. They may be a teacher, a playground bully or the next door neighbor. As we get older, it seems these difficult people multiply and become our bosses, our coworkers and sometimes even our friends and family.

It's not just modern day society that provides examples of dysfunctional and difficult relationships. The reality is, difficult relationships have been going on since the beginning of time. Israel (also called Jacob) had 12 sons that would eventually make up the 12 tribes of Israel. Unfortunately trouble was brewing among these boys from the time the youngest, Joseph was 17 years old.

Prayer:

(Take some time to pray for God to speak to your group through this week's study.)

Read Genesis 37:3-11.

- Because it was not uncommon for the people of Joseph's day to have God speak to them in dreams, the content of a person's dream was taken seriously and often as future prophecy. Why do you think Joseph chose to share his dreams with his older brothers?
- In what ways do you see a natural competition among the men or boys in your extended family and friendships/ relationships? What about the women?

Israel sends Joseph to help his brothers graze their flocks. Check out what they plot against Joseph:

Read Genesis 37:18-24.

Fortunately for Joseph his brothers decided not to kill him. Unfortunately, they decided to sell him as a slave instead.

- Although most people will not plot to kill or sell into slavery those who are difficult in their lives, what are some of the things people do today to get back at those they dislike?
- Be it a co-worker, a neighbor, a family member, a boss; what are some of the things you catch yourself doing to "get back at" those who frustrate you?

Everybody's Stupid – taking responsibility for our part

It would be easy to point to Joseph's brothers as the culprits of this family's problems. They are the ones who made some stupid relational choices. However, with a closer look, it is easy to see that all the members of this family displayed some degree of relational stupidity.

"Stupid is as Stupid does" - Forrest Gump

- Think back on a relationship in your life that has caused you grief and pain. During that season of your life was it easy or difficult for you to believe that God was WITH you?

It is often our temptation to focus on the stupid things that other people do in relationships when we fail to see that sometimes the most problematic thing in the relationship is US. A common saying in recovery circles is: “We have to clean up our own side of the street.” Scripture puts it this way:

Read Luke 6:42.

- Why do people tend not to examine themselves first as the text suggests, but instead look only at the faults of others?
- When Israel and Joseph began to recognize the anger of the brothers, what could they have done to take responsibility for their part in the rising tension?

God makes even stupid things good.

Eventually, Joseph ends up as second in command in Egypt! (You just have to read it to believe it...’cause it is a great epic story.) (Genesis 37-50). While ruling in Egypt, the land of Joseph’s father and brothers experiences a seven year famine. The only grain and food is stored in Egypt. So, seeking food, Joseph’s brothers find themselves bowing at his feet. Although at first they do not recognize him, Joseph certainly recognizes his brothers. Joseph not only gives them food, but persuades the Pharaoh to allow his family to live on a plot of land in Egypt. After their father’s death, Joseph’s brothers assume that Joseph will want to take revenge on them.

Read Genesis 50:15-21.

Because of Joseph’s wisdom in leading Egypt, many lives were being saved during the seven years of famine. God clearly used Joseph for His good purposes. My favorite quote from Joseph to his brothers is, “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”

This is similar to another verse in the Bible: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

- Where are you facing relational difficulty in your life right now and need hope that God will make good out of it?

Bottom line is everyone has moments of relational stupidity. We all do things that hurt the people we love and we all have been hurt by the people we love. In order to have strong, close relationships in our lives it will inevitably involve forgiveness and reconciliation. Keeping the following things in mind will help us forgive and reconcile when those in our lives make stupid relational choices:

- I need to take responsibility for my part.
- God is always with me.
- God will use it for good.

What’s Next?

- Which one of the above three perspectives is the most difficult for you? What is a specific step you can take to move forward in this area?