



# JHWW2017

## DISCUSSIONGUIDE

this people's **heart** has become calloused  
they hardly **hear** with their ears  
and they have closed their eyes  
otherwise they might **see** with their eyes  
**hear** with their ears  
**understand** with their hearts and turn  
and I would **heal** them

matthew **13:15**



## discussion starters

- What is one thing you heard or sung at this session that made an impression on you or that you have a question about?
- What is your favorite movie or book and what do you like the most about it?
- Do you like movies or books that have a moral or have lesson to be learned?

## discussion questions

**SEE** Parables are simple stories that Jesus used to teach deeper truths. Jesus said there are basically four types of soil or hearts...a hard heart, a shallow heart, a heart choked out by the world and an open heart.

- What kinds of things make your heart hard? (sin, hurt)
- What kinds of things make your heart shallow? (distractions)
- What kinds of things can choke out your heart? (divided heart)
- What kinds of things make your heart open? (prayer, worship)

**HEAR** Maybe you are worried that your heart might be choking out or shallow or even worse, hardened. God has some Good News for you!

Read Ezekiel 11:19

"I will give them an **undivided heart** and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their **heart of stone** and give them a **heart of flesh**."

Talk together about the Good News that God will give us new, undivided hearts. We don't get the new heart by doing good things....we get the new heart when we SEE we need it, HEAR the Good News that God will give us one and BELIEVE his promise.

**BELIEVE** In Matthew 13:15 tells us that if we see with our eyes, hear with our ears and understand with our hearts (believe) and turn (repent) he will heal us. This healing is not a physical healing but a spiritual healing.

End your time together by praying, asking God to forgive sin, to heal hurts to replace our hard and divided hearts with new hearts open to hearing the Word of God



## discussion starters

- What are some of the social groups of your school? Which group do you identify with the most? Which group do you identify with the least? Why?
- We live in a time when racial and social relations are really tense. How do you experience this in your life?

## discussion questions

**SEE** The Law says that the way to inherit eternal life is to “Love the Lord your God with *all your heart* and with *all your soul* and with *all your strength* and with *all your mind*” and “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

- How do you feel about the word “all” in this verse? Does it seem fair to you?
- What about when Jesus says “do this (all) and you will live?” How do you feel about *that*? Does that seem impossible? (it is)
- Have you ever felt like the man who was robbed, beaten, stripped and left for dead?
- What did you need from others? Good advice? Rules to follow? (you needed mercy and love)
- The priest and Levite (a priest’s assistant) ignored the man. How do you feel about that?
- The Samaritan (cultural enemy of the Jews) took care of the man...extravagantly! How do you feel about that?

*It is important that your students see that Jesus told a story about GOD’S MERCY instead of OUR PERFECTION!*

**HEAR** The main point of this parable is that **God is MERCIFUL!** When we are destroyed by our sin and enemies of God (Romans 5:10, Colossians 1:21) **GOD IS NOT OUR ENEMY!!!**

- He sees us in our brokenness and messiness
- He comes to us in Christ because he is MERCIFUL
- He binds up our wounds & cares for us
- Because He was merciful to us...we can be merciful to others

**BELIEVE** The answer to the question “What must I do to inherit eternal life is really answered in the parable about mercy. An inheritance is not earned: it is received. End by talking about receiving mercy. Discuss how the mercy of God changes the way we look at and serve others.



## discussion starters

- Have you ever said “It’s not fair!” at home? Why?
- Have you ever been really stubborn about something and later found out you had been wrong? How did that feel?
- What was the best celebration you ever went to (birthday party, graduation party, Super Bowl/World Series parade) and why was it so amazing?

## discussion questions

**SEE** The brothers in this story are both selfish and self centered.

- In what ways was the younger brother selfish?
- In what ways was the older brother selfish?
- Can you identify with times that you have been like either or both brothers?
- In what ways did the two brothers disrespect their father?

**HEAR** The story is really not about the brothers although we learn a lot about ourselves from them. The story is really about the father.

- If you were the father, how would you handle the younger brother’s request and his messed up life?
- If you were the father, how would you handle the older brother’s protest since he was the “good son”?

The reality is that both sons were messed up - they only wanted the stuff that the father could give them and all the father wanted was a relationship with his sons.

God wants a relationship with us, no matter if we are messed up.

**BELIEVE** The point of this parable is that the father (God) went to both of his sons. He ran to the younger son to welcome him home with a party and he went out to the older son to plead with him to come into the home to join the party.

This is a good time to talk to your students about salvation. They have heard about open hearts and about the mercy of God and now they have heard about the God who comes to them and welcomes them into the house of the Father.

The younger son “came to his senses” which is the same phrase used in 2 Timothy 2:25-26 which talks about repentance.

Pray with your students that they would repent of their sin and be welcomed by the Father!



## discussion starters

- Do you ever dream about hitting the lottery? What would you do with \$126 million?
- What would you do if you owed someone \$126 million?
- What would you do if they forgave your debt?

## discussion questions

**SEE** Jesus isn't really talking about money...he's talking about relationships, specifically forgiveness.

- Are you like Peter who wanted to know how many times he should forgive his brother?
- Do you find that it's easy or difficult to forgive someone if they have hurt you? If the answer is "it depends" then ask, "...it depends on what?"
- How do you view your sin...as a little debt or a big debt? The reality is that our sin is a debt we cannot repay

**HEAR** The parable Jesus told was an illustration of how God has been patient and forgiving with us.

- Since Jesus has forgiven your sin, how grateful are you? Does it show in how you forgive others?
- CS Lewis said that everyone loves the idea of forgiveness until he has something to forgive.
- In the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) Jesus taught us to pray "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" and then followed it up with "*For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you don't forgive men their sins, your Father in heaven will not forgive your sins.*" (v 14-15). Why do you think Jesus takes our forgiveness of others so seriously?

**BELIEVE** The point of this parable is that the king (God) went to great lengths to forgive an outrageous debt. Forgiving a debt is basically paying for it yourself. God forgave our sin by paying for it himself!

- How should we respond to such amazing forgiveness?

Your students will likely struggle with this depending on the level of hurt they have experienced... remind them that forgiveness is often a struggle and often a process.

Pray that your students will have open hearts to receive God's forgiveness and open hearts to forgive others