

# Real Issues

## Lesson 3—Dealing with Prejudice\*

### OVERVIEW

Background Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 16:6-7

Key Verses: Psalm 8:3-6, Psalm 139:13-16, James 2:1-5, Philippians 2:3-8.

### BEFORE CLASS

**Preparation:** *Your preparation will determine the direction your class will go.*

- In what ways have you seen or experienced prejudice?
- How do you deal with feelings of prejudice, favoritism, or exclusion?
- Study and prepare your lesson so that you are familiar with the teaching outline.
- Pray for each student by name.
- Use the Contact 1-2-3 system to the right to follow up on students who have recently missed on Sunday morning.
- Pray for each student by name.

### CONTACT 1-2-3 SYSTEM

*CONTACT 1--The first time a student is absent, give him a call.*

*CONTACT 2--Following the second absence, send him a postcard.*

*CONTACT 3-- The third week they are absent, pay him a visit.*

*THINK ABOUT IT: What does it say to a student when they miss multiple weeks in a row and are never contacted? It says, "It really doesn't matter if you're here or not." Small things communicate great messages. Let the three "small" things above communicate that you care and miss your students when they are absent.*

### OPENING ACTIVITY

#### Discussion Questions

- *How would you define prejudice?*

**SAY:** Webster's dictionary defines "prejudice" as "injury or damage resulting from some judgment or action of another in disregard of one's rights...an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics."<sup>1</sup>

- *What are some examples of prejudice?*
- *Have you ever seen someone act out of prejudice?*

- *What characteristics besides skin color have you seen bring out prejudice or hatred from people?*

SAY: Prejudice comes in all shapes and sizes. More subtle forms of prejudice include:

- (1) Trying to hang out with only the popular crowd and excluding others whom you consider not to “fit in” with your group.
- (2) Making fun of people with less or more than you have.
- (3) Shunning people whom you consider not to be “cool” enough to hang around.
- (4) Teasing people for their size or other physical features.
- (5) Snubbing people of whom you are envious or are jealous.
- (6) Avoiding talking to or acknowledging the presence of a crippled or mentally-challenged individual.

- *What are some other forms of prejudice?*

SAY: Beautiful and successful people are plastered across the covers of magazines, featured in commercials or pictured in music videos. There is an often unspoken social class system in our culture in which we play the “rating game” to determine a person’s “value” based on how they measure up in things like appearance, lifestyle, of the stuff they have.

Consider these examples:

- (1) Cars they drive.
- (2) Nice body—thin, shaped like a model, muscular.
- (3) Who their friends are.
- (4) Where they live or go to school.

- *Has there ever been a time when you felt that you were a victim of prejudice or favoritism—excluded, harassed, or made fun of? Share with the group how this made you feel. How did you respond?*

## **BIBLE LESSON**

### **Turn to 1 Samuel 16:6-7**

*While your students are turning in their Bibles, SAY:* Here’s the background on the verses we are about to read. Although God was their King, the nation of Israel had pleaded to have a physical king like all the other nations that surrounded them. Finally God gave them a king: King Saul, who became continually disobedience to the Lord. Finally, the Lord rejected Saul as king and sent the prophet Samuel to Jesse’s house to anoint one of his sons as the next king. When he arrived Jesse lined up his sons and Samuel’s eyes fell on Eliab. Eliab must have had a kingly look or perhaps looked something like Saul, tall and handsome, but listen to what happened...

**Choose a volunteer to read—Read 1 Samuel 16:6-7**

SAY: Eliab may have had the “right” look, but God had rejected Him. Instead, God had chosen young David who hadn’t even been called out of the fields where he had been taking care of the sheep.

- *What do these verses show about God’s standard of evaluating people? (God looks beyond outward appearances to the heart. He views us from the inside and cares about who we really are.)*
- *How do people typically judge others? (On the basis of externals—what people look like, have or don’t have, social status, etc.)*
- *Why do you think so many people have trouble looking to the heart of others instead of judging them by sight or physical standards?*
- We are naturally drawn to people who are like us—people with similar interests, looks, tastes, and convictions.—*Is this wrong?*

SAY: There is nothing wrong in gravitating towards people who are similar to you, but it is wrong if you:

- (1) Begin to think that you’re better than others.
- (2) Become exclusive and purposefully leave out others because you don’t like them or because they are different than you.
- (3) Stop caring about others because of their differences
- (4) Snub, tease, ignore, avoid, or become hateful to others.

SAY: God calls you out of your comfort zone to be a friend to the friendless or to people who are different than you, regardless of their race, of how rich or poor they are, of whether or not they annoy you, etc. God wants you to value and care about everyone, just as He does, without regard to their physical appearances.

## KEY VERSE

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Psalm 8:3-6

- *According to Psalm 8, what is the source of the rich dignity of every person?*

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Psalm 139:13-16

- *According to Psalm 139, why is each individual so valued by God?*

SAY: You are an intimate expression of God’s creative heart:

- (1) Each of us is unique. There is nobody else in all creation or in all time who has been just like you or me. You are one-of-a-kind.
- (2) Each of us is an intentional masterpiece.
- (3) God takes great pride and delight in His creations, just as any artist would in the masterpiece he has made.

Choose two volunteers to read—Read James 2:1-5 and Philippians 2:3-8

- *According to these verses, how does God want us to treat people that don't meet society's ideals? What should our attitude and actions be if we are to be like Jesus?*

## **WRAP IT UP**

*SAY:* Here's the point: God created each of us in His image, with a unique design and plan. He doesn't look at the superficial differences we see in each other. Instead, He looks at who we really are on the inside. He wants to renew our minds and change our hearts so we see and treat others the same way He does.

## **Prayer Time**

*Pray specifically today that your students learn how to share the heart of God and that they are free of prejudice in their lives.*

List prayer requests below and on the back of this page and pray for your students throughout the week. *Ask if any of your students want to pray today.*

## **Prayer Requests**

\*This lesson is based in part on "Flood Volume 1, Lesson 6: Not One of Us" (Nashville, TN: Serendipity House, 2005), 77-88.

<sup>1</sup>*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11<sup>th</sup> edition (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003), 979.