**Table Talk**

**Sermon Series: Relationship Status - Confused**

**February 9, 2020**

**Introduction (12 min)**

Welcome everyone to your Table Talk small group. Watch the video and share the story below, then open up the discussion with the questions provided.

**Table Talk Video: Relationship Status - Confused**

When I was a kid I was slightly fascinated by the blue light bug zappers. It always struck me as funny that a mosquito would be drawn to one. I mean, they don’t look like another mosquito so what was so attractive? Wasn’t the pile of dead mosquito carcasses below the light an adequate sign to stay away? Didn’t the hum and crackle of electricity warn them this could possibly be a dangerous proposition? Nope. Zap! How could a little light be so attractive?

I grew up just outside of Roanoke and frequently drove down Melrose Avenue. As you head east from Salem into Roanoke on Melrose, you can occasionally see a faint glowing light on the left hand side of the road. As we drove closer and closer the light would get brighter, my mouth would start to water, and without anyone saying a word we would put on our blinker, cut through the heavy traffic and park. Almost like a magical trance the HOT light at Krispy Kreme would draw us in. Didn’t I know they were bad for me? Didn’t I know they were full of sugar and empty calories? Weren’t the long lines a warning of the addictive nature of those freshly glazed, warm circles of goodness? Nope. \*Wipes drool from lip\* How could warm sugar be so attractive?

Desire is a powerful emotion. It can attract us to things when we least expect it. When Jesus was teaching the crowds of people, they were drawn to him like a mosquito to the zapper or a human to the HOT light. Many of them probably struggled to put the draw into words, but someone found a way to figure it out. We see it in Matthew 7:28-8:1.

“When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astonished at His teaching, because He taught as one who had authority, and not as their scribes. When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him.”

We live in a world full of desire that often leads to confusion about both what we really want and truly need. Confusion is a darkness to be trapped in. People were uncontrollably drawn to Jesus because he taught as one who had authority. The light of his teaching clearly cut through the darkness of confusion so people could see with clarity. His teaching still cuts through the confusion and illuminates the truth, and it is just as attractive today. Some people may balk at it like the scribes and Pharisees. Some may embrace it like the crowds. But everyone is seemingly inexplicably attracted by it.

May the light of God’s truth shine the light of clarity on your desires today.

- Pastor Reggie Phillips

**Prayer (3 minutes)**

Pray that the light of God’s truth and the authority of Jesus’ Word would shine brightly through your small group discussion and study, drawing each of you closer to the heart of God in the process.

**Starting the Discussion (6 minutes)**

1. What was the most intriguing thing in the message from this weekend’s service that attracted your attention?
2. What is the most attractive thing to you about Jesus?

**Unfolding the Biblical Story (24 minutes)**

**Read Matthew 7:28-8:1**

1. This passage is the conclusion to the Sermon on the Mount. Look over Matthew 5, 6, and 7, looking at all the different topics and aspects of life that Jesus taught on. Ask someone to read the headings out loud to your group.
2. In the Old Testament, Moses went up the mountain and received the Law from God and then shared it with the people. The Pharisees and teachers of the law were supposed to assume that same function as the law givers, and interpreters, for Israel. What was so attractive about what Jesus did in the Sermon on the Mount that was clearly different than what the people received from the religious teachers?

**Read Genesis 1:26-27**

1. Repeatedly God says that mankind is made in His image and likeness, then breaks that expression down into two specific traits. What two traits are listed?
2. The phrase “rule over” or “have dominion” can conjure up images of authority that can at times be negative, but in the Hebrew this phrase could just as readily be translated “manage well.” How does managing the creation well reflect God’s Image?
3. Male and Female are specific designations assigned by God at our creation. How could distinct genders co-laboring to shouldering the load of management reflect the Image of God?
4. God speaks of himself in the plural, “our image.” How might distinct genders functioning in harmony with different relational roles possibly reveal more about the Image of God to us?

**Read Matthew 19:3-6**

1. One of the biggest critiques of Biblical teaching about gender roles is that Jesus never directly addresses it, only Old Testament Law that we are told is replaced by the Law of the Spirit (Romans 8:2). How does this passage debunk that critique?
2. What is the only biblical standard for romantic and marital relationships that Jesus gives as the benchmark for everyone?
3. What does this say about the consistency of God’s teaching on relationships and gender design through scripture as a whole?

**Making Scripture Personal (10 minutes)**

1. Where have you allowed gender distinctions and roles to be blurred in your relationships? Have you abused or misused roles to hold authority or influence over another? Have you ignored those boundaries and so missed out on part of the revealed plan of God for your life?

**Prayer (3 minutes)**

 Lord, you created us with purpose and grace. Every part of your design is intentional and as we learn more about it, we learn more about you. Help us to see you through every relationship in our lives and to treat others as image bearers of Christ. Show us the great value you have placed in every person and how we can work together in healthy ways to continue being a blessing to your creation and to one another. We ask it in the name of our grand designer, Jesus. Amen.

**Wrapping Up (2 minutes)**

See if anyone has lingering questions or insights to share from your time of study and prayer. Summarize the group discussion as a reminder of what you learned together.

**Scripture Challenge (2 minutes)**

For your scripture challenge this week, work with your group to try and memorize Genesis 1:27. Meditate on it through the week and trust God will help you understand more and more how His image can be revealed through you and through your relationships.