

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Not in a small group? Contact us at smallgroups@myriversidechurch.com

Ice Breaker: How do we determine what is attractive? Has your view of attractiveness changed over the years?

Group Discussion: *(Note: If your group is only meeting bi-weekly, cover questions 2 and 4 for this week. If time allows, go back to the remaining questions.)*

1. As part of the message, several women shared about what their fears were in talking about their body image. Do you share any of these fears or something similar? If so, when did these fears begin?
2. Have you ever avoided God because of how you feel you look? Have you been angry with God because of your physical appearance? Have you ever been thankful for your body? How does this impression or view of yourself impact your interaction with others? See Matthew 22:34-38.
3. Read and discuss Galatians 5:13-15. Have you ever been consumed by comparing yourself to someone else? How did that affect your relationship with that person? How did it impact your relationship with God?
4. What were your thoughts on the quote by Sharon Miller (see sermon notes)? What is at the root of the type of discontentment that she describes? Read and discuss 1 Samuel 15:23a and Galatians 1:10. In the Galatians passage, Paul is challenging the reader to evaluate whom they are trying to please. Who are you trying to please? Read and discuss Colossians 3:1-17. What alternative way does this passage offer? How do we begin to apply the truth of this passage?

Just for You

Read and reflect on the following passages: 1 Samuel 16:7, Romans 12 and Colossians 3:1-17.

Have you ever avoided a social situation because of your appearance? How did you feel after not attending? What might have happened if you had gone anyway?

How much of your heart/mind is consumed by how you look? Does your media exposure affect how you view and accept yourself?

What can you celebrate this week about how God is transforming you to be more like Him?

MESSAGE NOTES & SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

"FLESHLY FOCUS"
NOVEMBER 9, 2014



"Fleshly Focus"

November 9, 2014

By Senior Pastor, Tom Lundeen

(You can sign up for Pastor Tom's e-newsletter for his thoughts on various subjects at

pastortom@myriversidechurch.com)

MESSAGE NOTES

We live in a culture that is consumed with appearances and followers of Jesus are impacted by this _____ on what others look like; and social media only magnifies this to levels never known before in human history.

When we are preoccupied with our bodies/appearance, then:

1. Our Main Life Priority is _____ (note Matthew 22:34-38)

_____ God first, above everyone and everything else, should be the main focus and first priority of every human being.

...not *phileo* = friendly affection, brotherly love, but *agapao* = choosing for the highest _____ of another, ultimate commitment of devotion.

When we are...obsessed with our bodies and what we look like, living a life of unreserved _____ and commitment for God becomes impossible.

...if we are preoccupied with our body/appearance, we have broken priorities and a _____ focus of what really matters.

"Countless women prepare for worship on Sunday morning, not by quieting their hearts and minds before the Lord, but by putting on makeup, curling their hair, and squeezing into a pair of _____. These women then walk into church, distracted and insecure, comparing themselves to the women around them, and wondering if they measure up. Focusing on God is a _____.

Of course, worship is not just a Sunday morning affair, and neither is the battle over body image. Every time a woman turns on the television, strolls past a magazine aisle, watches the numbers rise on the scale, or spots that first gray hair, the battle wages on.

I cannot speak to the experience of men, but studies show that men fight this battle too. Images of six-pack abs, athletic _____, trendy clothes, and perfectly styled hair are all over the media...and if we're being honest, in many an evangelical pulpit." (Sharon Miller)

Pride in what we look like (or wanting to be proud of what we look like) can move us into a debilitating spiritual _____ (note 1 Samuel 15:23a).

2. We Become _____-Centered (note Matthew 22:39-40)

The implications of having a broken perspective about our bodies/appearance when it comes to loving others as ourselves is enormous...and very evident in our _____-obsessed culture today.

When we are not happy with what we see in the mirror, then we tend to cast a more _____ eye at how other people look in comparison to ourselves.

10,000 people a month Google the question, "Am I _____?"

Instead of being _____-focused, a broken view of our body/appearance pushes us towards being negative and critical of others.

Left to ourselves, we tend to magnify the _____ of others (especially how they look) and compare and contrast ourselves with others instead of seeking to serve others.

Note Galatians 5:13-15 = "biting and devouring" = "_____ fighting...animals attacking each other"

We can become satisfied with our "selfie":

- We can turn our bodies into an _____ that consumes more of our time, thoughts, desires, energy, effort, and even money than what we give to God.
- And our obsession with our appearance can encourage us to take a searchlight and a magnifying glass to look for the faults and imperfections in the bodies of others instead of looking for ways to _____ and serve others with Christ's love.
- In other words, we can find ourselves on the wrong end of what Jesus defined as the 1st and 2nd greatest commandments...

Tell someone about the next step you took today in your spiritual journey. You can use the connect card to let us know about your commitment, too!



RIVERSIDE NOTES
Sermon: "Fleshly Focus"
Series: *Selfie Satisfaction*
November 9, 2014

We live in a culture that is consumed with appearances and followers of Jesus are impacted by this fixation on what others look like; and social media only magnifies this to levels never known before in human history.

When we are preoccupied with our bodies/appearance, then:

1. Our Main Life Priority is Skewed (note Matthew 22:34-38)

Loving God first, above everyone and everything else, should be the main focus and first priority of every human being.

...not *phileo* = friendly affection, brotherly love; but *agapao* = choosing for the highest good of another, ultimate commitment of devotion.

When we are...obsessed with our bodies and what we look like, living a life of unreserved love and commitment for God becomes impossible.

...if we are preoccupied with our body/appearance, we have broken priorities and a blurred focus of what really matters.

"Countless women prepare for worship on Sunday morning, not by quieting their hearts and minds before the Lord, but by putting on makeup, curling their hair, and squeezing into a pair of Spanx. These women then walk into church, distracted and insecure, comparing themselves to the women around them, and wondering if they measure up. Focusing on God is a battle.

Of course, worship is not just a Sunday morning affair, and neither is the battle over body image. Every time a woman turns on the television, strolls past a magazine aisle, watches the numbers rise on the scale, or spots that first gray hair, the battle wages on.

I cannot speak to the experience of men, but studies show that men fight this battle too. Images of six-pack abs, athletic builds, trendy clothes, and perfectly styled hair are all over the media...and if we're being honest, in many an evangelical pulpit." (Sharon Miller)

Pride in what we look like (or wanting to be proud of what we look like) can move us into a debilitating spiritual place (note 1 Samuel 15:23a).

2. We Become Me-Centered (note Matthew 22:39-40)

The implications of having a broken perspective about our bodies/appearance when it comes to loving others as ourselves is enormous...and very evident in our selfie-obsessed culture today.

When we are not happy with what we see in the mirror, then we tend to cast a more critical eye at how other people look in comparison to ourselves.

10,000 people a month Google the question, "Am I ugly?"

Instead of being other-focused, a broken view of our body/appearance pushes us towards being negative and critical of others.

Left to ourselves, we tend to magnify the faults of others (especially how they look) and compare and contrast ourselves with others instead of seeking to serve others.

Note Galatians 5:13-15 = "biting and devouring" = "cats fighting...animals attacking each other"

We can become satisfied with our "selfie":

- We can turn our bodies into an idol that consumes more of our time, thoughts, desires, energy, effort, and even money than what we give to God.
- And our obsession with our appearance can encourage us to take a searchlight and a magnifying glass to look for the faults and imperfections in the bodies of others instead of looking for ways to love and serve others with Christ's love.
- In other words, we can find ourselves on the wrong end of what Jesus defined as the 1st and 2nd greatest commandments...

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