



# MEETING GUIDE

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## Session 5: God's Way Is Impartial

October 21 - October 27, 2018

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### Hangout (30 Minutes)

1. Use the book The Complete Book of Questions. Have one person pick a number 601 - 700. Remember, everyone has the right to pass on any question.
2. If you haven't done so, discuss what's next for your group.

### Watch the Video (24 Minutes)

Watch the video if necessary. If everyone viewed the sermon before the meeting, add this time to your discussion.

### Discuss (30 Minutes)

*It's okay if you don't get to every question. Hosts can pick the questions they believe would be best for their group.*

- 1) God's way doesn't play favorites, but have you ever felt like that isn't true? Explain.
- 2) What kind of person challenges you the most?
- 3) Read Deuteronomy 10:17-19.

*For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.*

What do we learn about the impartiality of God through these words from Moses?

- 4) In Matthew 5:43-48 Jesus says, "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."
  - How do you respond to Jesus' command to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you?
  - Jesus displayed his love for those who persecuted him from the garden, through trials and flogging, ending with his crucifixion on the cross when he uttered the words, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." What would your best attempt at this look like?
- 5) Aaron said, "**Loving those who challenge you will change you.**" How do you imagine God would change you by loving those who challenge you?

- 6) Read Romans 12:9-21. In this passage, Paul writes many practical ways we can put love into action.

*Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Which of these instructions do you connect with most? Which challenges you?

- 7) Romans 12:20 uses the image of how responding to your enemy with kindness heaps burning coals on their head. A simple act of Christian kindness can often bring a hostile person to repentance before God and restore fellowship between people. Compassion toward an enemy is more effective than anger.

The phrase, "heap burning coals on his head," refers to an ancient Egyptian custom in which a person who wanted to show public contrition carried a pan of burning coals on his head. The coals represented the burning pain of his shame and guilt. When believers lovingly help their enemies, the help should bring shame to such people for their hate and animosity.

Do you think this tactic of showing compassion toward an enemy works in today's world? Why or why not?

- 8) What is one next step you would like to take from this week's message and discussion?

### **Summary**

God's Way of experiencing what we want most in our relationships is being impartial and sincere. Jesus taught and lived this ethic. Loving those who challenge us (including our enemies or those who persecute us) is a radical response and display of God's love. To get what you want most in relationships, treat others with impartiality and sincerely love those who challenge you for the better.

Next week we will learn that **God's Way in our relationships is full of mercy and good deeds.**

## **Pray (10 Minutes)**

Remembering that anyone can pass, go around the circle and have everyone share one prayer request they have. Listen carefully to the request of the person to your left, taking notes if it will help you remember. After everyone has shared, go around the circle again to pray for those requests by having the person to everyone's right briefly pray for that person's request. This could be a simple, one-sentence prayer like: "Dear Lord, please help \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_." The leader begins and ends the prayer.