



Date: _____

Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions Fitting In and Finding Friends Series, Lesson 18

Lesson Title: Coping With Cliques

Take Home Point: Cliques draw circles that shut people out. Jesus draws circles that invite people in.

Warm-Up:

We typically associate cliques with children in school. But adults have cliques, too. They may be formed at work, in school, in politics, even in church! Society is divided into classes, which are meant simply to identify social groupings but are frequently used in the same way as cliques – to keep people in or out of some special group. So we end up with “upper”, “middle”, and “lower” economic classes with their associated implications of worth. We have “professional”, “blue collar”, “unskilled” workers, again with some implied value to society, which by extension implies human worth. Socialism was based on the theory that the state could do away with classes just by declaring everyone equal. It was a bankrupt theory from the start, because it did not take into consideration the sinful nature of man. In his book *Animal Farm*, George Orwell satirized this idea and made famous the phrase, “All pigs are equal, but some are more equal than others.”

Read: Luke 7:36-50; Galatians 3:28

Observation (What happened?):

What about the woman bothered the Pharisee host?

How did the Pharisee treat Jesus?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

Why do you think the Pharisee invited Jesus to dinner in the first place?

Why did the woman do what she did?

Insight:

Why do people form cliques? They want to be considered and recognized as special. “I’m special and you’re not.” Why the need to feel special or superior? Because everyone wants to establish their worth as a person and be known for that worth. Cliques are an attempt to do that by putting others down as not being worthy, i.e., not having worth, to be part of the “in” crowd. This is completely counter to God’s perspective. In his eyes, every human being has intrinsic worth as his special creation, all equally so. That’s why Jesus was equally willing to be with Pharisee and sinner, tax collector and leper, poor and rich. Real worth is measured by God and demonstrated by the price he paid to free us from sin and death and restore our fellowship with him – the life of his own special Son. That’s where everyone’s worth really comes from, and why we are to treat each person as having equal worth, just as God does.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

How do you treat Jesus when you invite him into your life?

Could you be accused of being in a clique? If you think so, how can you reduce that perception (or reality) this week?