

Reflecting the Truth to Those Around Us

by Annette Gullick, Copyright 10/1/2001

Lesson Six

Lesson Objective: That students desire to provide an accurate, biblical reflection of the worth of others that surround them.

Bible Passage: 2 Cor. 5: 16-21

Bible Truth: We should see those around us as God sees them: either as a new creation in Christ, or as someone God wants to be reconciled with.

Memory Verse: 2 Cor. 5: 20

Before you begin:

- ◆ copies of individual “say” and “respond” paper strips for opening section
- ◆ 3 sets of the 10 statements
- ◆ tape
- ◆ three “mirrors” [see the interactive learning section for details];
- ◆ copies of verse handout
- ◆ fresh copies of “Mirror, Mirror”
- ◆ “Mirror, Mirror” handouts from the first week filled in by the students

Opening: Either make copies of the following statements and responses and cut them into individual strips or write them on pieces of paper and then before class tape one onto the bottom of each chair that you anticipate someone will be using. It is important that there is a response for each statement and vice versa...

A Word to the Leader

Tell the students that underneath their chairs they will find taped a small piece of paper and that, after reading it, they should walk around the room and speak or respond to other students according to the directions on their piece of paper. Explain that some people have statements and some people have responses and that they are looking for people whose statement or response is the appropriate complement to their own. When they find a partner they should stay together until everyone has a partner, at which point have them form three “teams” based on the three pairs of

statements and responses. Ask them to stay in those teams for the interactive learning section.

Say: My dog was run over by a car this morning	Respond: Look sad and say, I am so sorry to hear that
Say: Hi, my name is _____[say your name]	Respond: It is very nice to meet you
Say: Look, this morning I was so tired I put on a white sock and a black sock	Respond: Smile and laugh out loud

- **What made it easy or hard to find a partner?**
- **Those of you who had statements, how did you feel when someone responded inappropriately?**
- **Those of you who had responses, how did you feel responding in an inappropriate way?**
- **Can you think of a time when you have responded to someone in a way that was inappropriate for the situation?**

For the last few weeks we have been learning about ourselves, examining what other people think about us, what we think about ourselves, and what God thinks about us. My hope is that as a result of this study you have a more clear idea of your worth as a person and the foundation of that worth. Today we are going to talk about how to respond to other people appropriately so that we reflect the truth about them in love.

Before class: prepare so that each of the three teams will have a unique set of the following ten statements. You need to be able to distinguish the sets from each other, so either copy them with different fonts, onto different colors of paper, write with colored ink, cut them differently (for example one set could have rounded corners, one square corners, and one the corners clipped off), etc.

Arrange three places which represent the three “mirrors”: the distorted reflection the world shows us, God’s perfect reflection of unsaved mankind, Gods perfect reflection of his children. You may want to tape three titles on the wall, or draw the three “mirrors” on pieces of paper or bring in actual mirrors and put titles over them (with Vaseline on the “distorted one.”)

While the students are still in their teams from the opening, explain that you will give each team a stack of statements that express something that is reflected in these mirrors. Each team should choose one person to stick the statements on the corresponding “mirror.” The teams will discuss as a group which statement goes best with which mirror and then the appointed person will run and stick it on that mirror.

Provide tape for them to use on the statements. The game begins when you give the statements to the teams. When the first team finishes, stop but then review the statements and return to the team all of the statements that were put in the wrong place. The winner is the team with the highest number of right answers.

Interactive Learning

Before class: prepare so that each of the three teams will have a unique set of the following ten statements. You need to be able to distinguish the sets from each other, so either copy them with different fonts, onto different colors of paper, write with colored ink, cut them differently (for example one set could have rounded corners, one square corners, and one the corners clipped off), etc.

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This Section for Leaders Only

You are important if you are talented or if you have money.	Distorted mirror, lesson 2
You are desirable if you have a good body or a nice face.	Distorted mirror, lesson 2
I really need to work harder for God to be able to love me.	Distorted mirror, lesson 4,5
Every human being is created in the image of God & is valuable.	God's view of humanity, lesson 3
All mankind has turned it's back on God and is sinful.	God's view of humanity, lesson 3
The punishment I deserve for my sins is death & separation from God.	God's view of humanity his children, lesson 3, 5
The punishment I should receive for my sins has been poured out on Jesus	God's view of his children lesson 3, 4, 5
When God looks at me he sees someone perfectly righteous and acceptable.	God's view of his children lesson 4
When God looks at me he sees a son or daughter that he loves a lot.	God's view of his children lesson 4
I really need to work harder so others see Christ in me.	Gods' view of his children, lesson 5

[Do not give this part to the teams!]

REVIEW: the whole series.

DISCUSSION: any of the statements they might have placed on the wrong mirror and lead the students to participate in a review of the basic messages of the mirrors:

- ◆ **Distorted mirror: your value depends on what you do or produce, people show distorted reflections of who you are and you also distort the way you understand what they “reflect” to you.**
- ◆ **God's view of humanity: every human being is created in the image of God and has immeasurable worth but all have sinned and brought upon themselves misery and punishment. God's view of people who have been adopted into his family through Christ: a new creation, dearly loved, and robed with Christ's righteousness and holiness.**

Bible Application:

Make sure everyone has something to write with and give each student a copy of the verse handout.

2 Cor. 5: 16-21: So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal

through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Instruct them to draw a line between each word until they have deciphered the Bible verse. Have someone read his or hers aloud and then answer these questions:

- **What are some specific examples of how the way we view someone affects how we treat them? [A rich person might treat a waiter rudely because he thinks he is superior, etc.]**
- **What is the worldly way to view people? [Judge them for what they have or for what they can do for us or how they treat us, encourage them to give specific answers like "Put physically perfect people out to be seen and hide physically imperfect people."]**
- **How can we show people around us that they are created in God's image and have value?**
- **How should an ambassador treat the people in the country he is sent to?**
- **How will we treat other believers if we view them as new creations in Christ, totally forgiven and loved by God? [Leaders: Don't be satisfied with "churchy" sounding answers like "love them" but make the students get specific, "We will not snicker at the old lady who sings off key", "We will not feel superior to someone who has less money or status than us," We etc."]**

Commitment:

Hand out copies of "Mirror, Mirror."

Explain that last time they used this sheet it was to analyze what these people or groups reflect to us. This time we are going to think about what we reflect to them and what we should reflect to them. Encourage them to take the time to think about each person or group and consider how God sees them and then to compare what the student thinks about them with how God sees them. For example, they could have parents or siblings who do not have a personal relationship with God. Although the student thinks of them as people who make unfair rules or borrow clothing without asking, God calls them to be ambassadors to those people. Or they might have a classmate at school who goes to another church but that they don't get along with and God sees the other person as a loved son of God just as much as the student himself/herself.

When you see that they have finished take a few minutes for several people to share what they have written down. Then ask them to listen to a true story.

ILLUSTRATION: *Mel was a loser. His family had moved to Australia from America and his classmates teased him about his accent. He hated that. And he hated school. He*

would skip school to go to the pool hall and always found himself in trouble. After completing high school, he did dead-end jobs like waxing surfboards and bagging groceries. He was headed nowhere.

But not everyone teased him. His sister cared too much for him to let him waste his life. Although he'd never considered acting, she encouraged him to audition at the prestigious National Institute of Dramatic Arts in Sydney. And her encouragement went past mere words. She paid his audition fee and helped him prepare for the audition. He got his first part as "Romeo" and Mel Gibson eventually became one of the most successful actors/producers in Hollywood. Have you heard of him? What movies has he starred in? You probably recognize him from such movies as Brave Heart, Lethal Weapon, The Patriot, and even a voice in Chicken Run.

So what's my point? If it hadn't have been for the encouragement of his sister, Mel Gibson could have still been waxing surfboards and bagging groceries. She changed the entire course of her brother's life by forgetting her personal interests long enough to encourage someone that others thought of as a loser.

We've said that all people were created in God's image and have incredible worth. What would our youth groups and homes and neighborhoods be like if we caught the vision of becoming people blossomers. What if instead of walking into a group thinking "I hope everyone thinks I'm cool," you come thinking "I wonder who I can encourage today?" That one change could revolutionize your youth group, home and neighborhood and change the course of many lives.

To paraphrase Christian author C.S. Lewis in his book, "The Weight of Glory," none of us have ever met a mere mortal. The most boring, plain, geeky person you've ever met may one day go to heaven and become a creature so gloriously awesome that, if you were to see him today, you'd be tempted to worship him. Or, he may become so corrupt and disfigured in hell that you'd look at him and shrink back in horror. All the people we rub shoulders with each day – our little brothers and sisters, our parents, that punk down the street and the nerdy Freshman who embarrasses us – we're nudging them toward one of those two destinies by the way we treat them. Those are immortals that we sit with in class, watch TV with at home, laugh with, laugh at, accept or snub. "There are no ordinary people."

Closing:

Return to the students their copies of the "Mirror, Mirror" handout from the first lesson. Give them a chance to look them over and then ask for people to comment on how their understanding of who they are has developed throughout the series. If they need help getting started, ask specific questions comparing what they wrote down about how God sees them with what they have learned in the course.

Close with “popcorn” prayers, where students, in no particular order, can express brief prayers of thanksgiving for who they are or requests for the power and insight to treat others as God would have you treat them.

Copies of Statements for Interactive Learning

- ❖ **You are important if you are talented or if you have money.**
- ❖ **You are desirable if you have a good body or a nice face.**
- ❖ **I really need to work harder for God to be able to love me.**
- ❖ **Every human being is created in the image of God and is valuable**
- ❖ **All mankind has turned its back on God and is sinful.**
- ❖ **The punishment I deserve for my sins is death and separation from God.**
- ❖ **The punishment I should receive for my sins has been poured out on Jesus.**
- ❖ **When God looks at me he sees someone perfectly righteous and acceptable.**
- ❖ **When God looks at me he sees a son or daughter that he loves a lot.**
- ❖ **I really need to work harder for God to be able to love me.**
- ❖ **I really need to work harder so others see Christ in me**

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