



GROUPS AT CROSS POINT

BREAKING THE ICE

Have you ever walked in to a situation and immediately thought, "I do not belong here?" What happened?

Is pleasing others and having favor with others important to you? Does it ever become more important to you than it should?

MAIN CONTENT

Over the last few weeks, we've been talking about growing in wisdom, stature, favor with God and favor with man. (Luke 2:52)

This week, Pastor Drew talked about what having favor with man looks like in your life. When we think about favor with man, we see Jesus using his influence as favor with man in the context of his relationships.

He did this by choosing a relational path to the cross. Jesus used relationships to teach and influence others about His Father's love.

1. Who has been a healthy influence in your life?

Relational influence doesn't mean popularity. Relational influence (favor with man) is a posture and not a popularity position. In each relationship we have, we tend to compare ourselves to the other person in the relationship.



2. Is there a relationship in your life that involves unhealthy comparison?

The goal of favor with man is not to compare but to love well, no matter the circumstance. This doesn't mean the other person can walk all over you or take advantage of you. Treating each other as equals and respecting one another is important in all relationships. Jesus wants us to stand up for what we believe in



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love while treating one another as equals.

3. When have you had to disagree with someone else while showing love? Did you see them react differently when you loved them through the disagreement?

In Acts 16:25-31, the Bible tells us about Paul and Silas finding favor with man. Go ahead and take some time to read the story.

After some time in jail, Paul and Silas found themselves freed from their prison cells. In that moment, they could have taken advantage of their newfound freedom, but they did not. They took the time to see the emotionally upset jailer and tell him about Jesus. They loved him despite their differences and the problems they had between one another.

4. Have you ever had a time where you had to loves someone who had wronged you and show them the love of Jesus? What happened?

God honored Paul and Silas when they loved the jailer through their differences. This act of love and kindness showed honor both to God and to the jailer.

Paul and Silas saw the jailer as Jesus would see him. When we have the love of Christ in us, we begin to see others and their circumstances the way Jesus sees them. This kind of love brings us favor with man.

There are three ways to find favor with man: Open your mind, open your circle and open your heart.

When you open your mind, you take the time to look beyond the surface level of a person. You learn their story and hear more about them.

5. When was the last time you asked someone about their life story? (Not someone just like you, but someone with whom you probably would not be friends.)

When we listen to someone with an open mind and no pre-judgments, it allows God's love to shine through us.

When you open your circle, you are taking a step to make a new friend, someone with whom you wouldn't normally be friends.



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6. Describe a time where you opened your circle to find a new friend. What did you learn from that new friendship?

When we take the time to open our circle to new people in our lives, we have the option to learn something new and let God work in that relationship.

We all have hurts and wounds. When we open our hearts, it allows us to sympathize with others, share in each other's pain and pray for one another.

7. How often do you open up your heart with people?

8. Do you tend to be vulnerable with people or keep your hurts and pain to yourself? Explain.

Favor with man is less about how people treat you and more about how we treat other people. For us to truly have favor with others, we need to love them like Christ loves us and use what we have to help them.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, we want to grow in wisdom, stature, favor with You and favor with man. We know the more time we spend with You, the more we will grow in these things. Please show us where we put other things above You in our lives. Will You show us how to love others well – more than we love ourselves – and how to use our gifts to help those who need it? We thank You for this in Your name, amen.

ACTION STEP

This week, pray and ask God who you can speak with to hear their story, someone with whom you would not usually associate because you are different. Pray and ask God to open your circle by meeting someone you wouldn't normally spend time with for a coffee or lunch. You never know how God can work in those moments. Open your heart and share what God is doing in your life – you never know who will be inspired by what God is doing.



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Next week starts our Awaken series. If you haven't grabbed a prayer packet, you can do that by visiting <https://awakennashville.com/>.

We would love for you to join us in prayer for the city of Nashville.