

MAD WORLD

LIVING SANE IN A CRAZY WORLD

Mad World Series

Part 4 - "At The Center Of Our Issues"

Small Group Material

May 21st, 2017

Leader Guide

Bottom Line: *Authority is the expression of humble submission.*

Study Verses: *James 4:4-7, Ephesians 2:14-16, Psalm 118:19-20, James 3:16, John 17:20-23*

Define The Win: *Participants would reflect on their perception of authority. They would pinpoint where they are attempting to use God to win an argument or force others to see things from their perspective. Group members would articulate where humility is required in their approach to the issues that matter most to them.*

Key Points

- *The more passionate we are about an issue, the more submissive we need to be.*
- *Grace comes to us by submission to the Truth.*
- *Entering the narrow gate is the way towards freedom. When we enter this way, we quit being the center of our life.*
- *The system we're currently using isn't going to solve the issues in our country.*
- *Our heart longs to trust something solid. Unfortunately, we end up trusting things that aren't trustworthy.*
- *Pride yields superiority while humility leads to more authority.*
- *If the enemy can't keep us divided, he will settle for us unifying around anything other than God.*

- *Trying to get God "on our side" often brings out the worst in us.*
- *We need to bring our issues to Christ rather than Christ to our issues.*
- *Our culture has lost the ability to process authority.*
- *The issues in our world are only symptoms of what is really wrong.*

ENCOUNTER

- **How is authority commonly viewed in today's culture? What is the relationship most people, including yourself, have with authority?**
- **What dangers exist when we attempt to get God "on our side" of the issues? How does this mindset influence our relationships with those on the opposite side of the issue?**
- **What does it look like to bring our issues to Christ rather than Christ to our issues?**

FORMATION

- **Read James 3:16 and James 4:4-7. How does pride and humility influence our interaction and the way we handle God's truth?**
- **Read Matthew 7:13-14 and Psalm 118:19-20. What does it mean to enter the narrow gate? What happens to our center when we head in this direction? Why is freedom found in this place?**
- **Read John 17:20-23 and Ephesians 2:14-16. Where should true unity inside the church be found? Why would the enemy settle for us being unified around an issue rather than God?**

EXPRESSION

- **Do you believe that Christ can be trusted with His Kingdom here on earth? Why or why not? Does the way you live your life reflect your answer?**
- **The more passionate we are about an issue, the more submissive we need to be. What issues are you most passionate about? Where is submission needed in your response to this issue and those that it impacts?**
- **Where have you caught yourself saying, "How can they think or act like that?" in regard to those on the other side of an issue? How can you begin to understand their story and their perspective?**

LEADER INSIGHT: *Pride and religion can be a dangerous mix when confronting the challenging issues the world faces. The greater our passion towards an issue the higher the stakes we feel. When this is our mindset, conversations quickly turn into debates we must win at all costs. Rather than looking for commonalities, we cling to our differences. Trying to get God "on our side" often brings out the worst in us.*

Pride yields superiority. It's us vs. them, right vs. wrong, enlightened vs. naive and morally superior vs. everyone else. We bring Christ to our issues in as much as we cherry-pick select Scriptures that prove our point so that we can lay down the hammer of "truth" to our opponents.

If we allow the person on the other side of the table to get a word in edge wise, we quickly scoff and wonder how they could think like they do. But that's as far as we go in searching out the answer to that question. We see no value in being curious about their story, their side or their thoughts. It's much easier to craft a story in our mind that fills in the blanks.

We only cross the aisle in an attempt to drag them to our side. In our mind, the only way for this mad world to become sane again is for everyone to see things from our perspective. Only when people rally around the issues we are most passionate about will true peace, unity and freedom be felt. If the enemy can't keep us divided, he will settle for us unifying around anything other than God, including our issues. Without us even realizing it, unity around the issues becomes idolatry and the thing we truly worship.

When Jesus prays in John 17 that the church would be one He is speaking of a different type of unity. It's a unity around the person of Christ, not a robotic agreement of every single issue. As we grow more into the image of Christ individually, we become one.

The system we're currently using isn't going to solve the issues in our country. The issues in our world are only symptoms of what is really wrong. A different way of thinking about the world around us and our role within it is required. We need to bring our issues to Christ rather than Christ to our issues.

This begins by reflecting on our interaction with authority. The more passionate we are about an issue, the more submissive we need to be. We must look within ourselves and be honest about what drives our behavior and our response to others. What drives this passion? Am I fueled by pride? Have I taken truth and made it all about myself? Am I twisting Scripture to fit my agenda or make His name known? Only one person created truth and we are not Him. Humility admits that someone else defines truth. Authority is the expression of humble submission.