

STEPPING UP AND STEPPING OUT



LEARNING A NEW MINDSET ON BENEVOLENCE

SESSION 8:

CHANGING THE CULTURE AT HILLCREST

Personal Notes

OPENING: 5 MINUTES

Be sure and reinforce with your class that Hillcrest has many amazing people that are involved in many of our non-profits in the city that help with poverty, and we do a lot here at Hillcrest to reach out. You might even highlight some of the people in your class that are doing that very thing! We are not saying that Hillcrest needs a change of attitude in that direction, but we can always work harder and better to make a difference in our community and create a culture of serving others.

Opening Question: How would you describe the culture at Hillcrest towards people in poverty?

VIDEO: VARDIMAN ON POVERTY (12 MINS)

Discuss quickly thoughts about video, specifically how poverty can be defined in many different ways.

CHANGING THE CULTURE 20 MINUTES

This will be a discussion in ways that we can make changes in ourselves, our families, and our church to be more outward focused in reaching those in poverty.

⇒ **CHANGING THE CULTURE TAKES A CHANGE OF HEART.**

Go from a HARD HEART to a HOLY HEART.

22-23 “Therefore, tell Israel, ‘Message of God, the Master: I’m not doing this for you, Israel. I’m doing it for me, to save my character, my holy name, which you’ve blackened in every country where you’ve gone. I’m going to put my great and holy name on display, the name that has been ruined in so many

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countries, the name that you blackened wherever you went. Then the nations will realize who I really am, that I am God, when I show my holiness through you so that they can see it with their own eyes.

24-28 “For here’s what I’m going to do: I’m going to take you out of these countries, gather you from all over, and bring you back to your own land. I’ll pour pure water over you and scrub you clean. I’ll give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you. I’ll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that’s God-willed, not self-willed. I’ll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands. You’ll once again live in the land I gave your ancestors. You’ll be my people! I’ll be your God!

Ezekiel 36, MSG

DISCUSSION: How has God (or the Holy Spirit) stirred your heart towards those in poverty throughout this series? What are you willing to do about it?

⇒ **CHANGING THE CULTURE TAKES A
CHANGE OF HEAD.**

Go from a meaningless mind to a meaningful mind.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will....9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal,

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but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Romans 12, NIV

DISCUSSION: How has your mind been transformed from the way you used to think about poverty? What meaningful thoughts have come to mind?

⇒ **CHANGING THE CULTURE TAKES A CHANGE OF HABIT.**

Go from a hurting habit to a helpful habit.

23 Now your attitudes and thoughts must all be constantly changing for the better. 24 Yes, you must be a new and different person, holy and good. Clothe yourself with this new nature. 25 Stop lying to each other; tell the truth, for we are parts of each other and when we lie to each other we are hurting ourselves. 26 If you are angry, don't sin by nursing your grudge. Don't let the sun go down with you still angry—get over it quickly; 27 for when you are angry, you give a mighty foothold to the devil. 28 If anyone is stealing he must stop it and begin using those hands of his for honest work so he can give to others in need. 29 Don't use bad language. Say only what is good and helpful to those you are talking to, and what will give them a blessing. 30 Don't cause the Holy Spirit sorrow by the way you live. Remember, he is the one who marks you to be present on that day when salvation from sin will be complete. 31 Stop being mean, bad-tempered, and angry. Quarreling, harsh words, and dislike of others should have no place in your lives. 32 Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just

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as God has forgiven you because you belong to Christ.
(Ephesians 4, TLB)

DISCUSSION: What hurtful habits did you recognize in yourself from this passage? How can you turn those into something helpful?

CLOSING: WE MUST MAKE A CHOICE. (5 MINUTES)

- ⇒ We must choose individually first to make a difference and then be different. (Heart, Head, and Habits).
- ⇒ We must choose as families to not ignore the oppression of those in poverty, but to ignite a passion to meet those needs with our families.
- ⇒ We must choose together as a church family how we are going to reach out- and then reach out in force.

FOR THE ROAD:

As families, what are areas of our daily lives that we could change to be more open towards helping those in poverty?

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5 Essential Building Blocks of a Healthy Church Culture

Be honest with yourself about your actual culture.

Your culture is what your church feels like, how people behave, and how people treat each other. The values on the wall might say “Service with a smile” or “Excellent facilities”, but a simple look around will tell you whether the staff likes each other, or their customers. A trip to the bathroom might show stained paint, a lack of toilet paper, and a dirty sink.

Identify and eliminate toxins.

You can’t eliminate what you don’t identify, so identify the things you want removed from your culture.

Don’t mistake your beliefs with your values.

It’s easy to make an overly ‘spiritual’ set of values that you think are your cultural values because, well, in our culture, we value the bible.

Model the change you want to see.

As you go through defining your church’s culture and values, realize this: Your church will only be as healthy as you are. You can write the most powerful core values ever written, but if you don’t model them, they’ll never be a reality.

Write it down. (Create Accurate, Memorable Core Value Statements)

Once you’ve covered the first four building blocks of creating a healthy culture, you’re ready to put pen to paper. There are two places your culture and values can be crafted:

- *Your core value statements*
- *Your policies and procedures*

A healthy culture is so rare these days, but when you see it, it becomes a magnet for a world desperately in need of health.

Adapted from: <https://careynieuwhof.com/guide-on-how-to-create-an-amazing-church-culture/>

SESSION 8:

LIFE GROUPS

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- ⇒ *Why are churches not more honest about their culture, especially towards poverty?*
- ⇒ *Why is it important to remove toxins from your body? What happens if you don’t? How does this apply to a church body?*
- ⇒ *How do people mix beliefs with values? What happens when we do this?*
- ⇒ *Why should leaders model what they want to see in the church? How did Jesus do this in his own life?*
- ⇒ *What happens when you write something down that is important? Why should we do this as a church?*