



LOVE PEOPLE

SELF AWARENESS

Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Cultivate an awareness of the impact (both positive and negative) of one's presence on others, seeking to authentically re-present Christ in all circumstances.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

No matter the relationship, one consistent factor is the presence of ourselves. Many other aspects of our relationships will be distinct from each other. In one relationship, we will bring wisdom; in another, we will bring humor; in a third, we will bring comfort. In every relationship, though, we will bring ourselves—a reality that demands self-awareness. Consider the challenge of relating to those who lack self-awareness.

How often have we wished that friend would see it? *Doesn't he realize what he's doing?* Maybe there's a friend whose constant barrage of advice is belittling. Or maybe there's another friend who does a

"You can't get away from yourself by moving from one place to another."

-- Ernest Hemingway

great deal of talking but very little listening. Identifying the impact of other's presence (other-awareness) is easy, though. Self-awareness is much more difficult, and yet cultivating such awareness is a tremendous gift to those around us and a significant mark of maturity. For this reason, those committed to loving people will periodically ask, *"What do others wish I knew, but I'm seemingly unaware of?"* The self-aware know the gifts they bring and bring them boldly. They also know the challenges they bring and humbly work toward transformation. We impact those around us, whether we intend to or not, and the loving learn to discern the effect of their own presence.

Scripture addresses self-awareness both directly and indirectly. Directly, we are asked: *"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?"* (Matthew 7:3). The self-aware go after their plank before lovingly helping others with their own challenges. We also see examples of those who clearly lacked self-awareness, like the Pharisees who believed they were righteous, but were described by Christ as a *"brood of vipers!"* (Matthew 23:33). These points of deception are not surprising. We are told our enemy is a deceiver and a liar (Revelation 20:10), and no doubt he aims to deceive us about ourselves. Those who authentically love people not only seek to address deception in the world, but they are humble enough to ask others to tell them what they truly need to hear. *How can I bring a more helpful presence to our friendship? What do you wish I knew but seemingly don't? How have I blessed or challenged you? What would you like to have more of from me? What would you like to have less of from me?* These kind of honest conversations should only be had with those we know have our best interest in mind, but when done wisely and well, they will empower us to be the kind of loving people we genuinely want to be.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Is aware of at least three ways they bless others
- Is aware of at least one way they challenge others
- Has engaged a thorough self-evaluation by proactively seeking input from others at some point in the past three years
- Has two to three trusted friends who regularly speak openly about their strengths and weaknesses

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Proverbs 12:15

Observations:

Discernment Question: Consider a recent time when another person offered you advice. How did you receive it? Did you openly consider it? Did you outright dismiss it? Why?



Proverbs 14:8

Observations:

Discernment Question: How do you give thought to your own life? What current practices do you have that help you thoughtfully consider how you are currently living your life?

Proverbs 14:16

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you flirt with evil? Are you prone to anger? Are you thoughtful or are you careless?



Proverbs 15:14

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you actively seek knowledge, wisdom, and insight from others? Do you actively seek their wisdom and insight about yourself?

Proverbs 9:7-8, 17:10, 27:5, 28:23

Observations:

Discernment Question: When was the last time you were corrected? How did you receive the correction? Why were you receptive? Why were you unreceptive?



Jeremiah 17:9

Observations:

Discernment Question: To the best of your knowledge, in what areas of your life are you most susceptible to deception?

Matthew 7:3-5

Observations:

Discernment Question: What log do you currently have in your own eye? Who could you ask to help you with it?



Romans 12:3

Observations:

Discernment Question: How do you view yourself? Do you struggle with either arrogance or insecurity (or both)?

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Observations:

Discernment Question: As you read this passage, take out the word love, insert your name, and read it again ("Tim is patient, Tim is kind..."). How accurately does this passage describe you?



1 Timothy 4:16

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you currently keeping a close watch on yourself and your belief system? What are you doing daily to get to know yourself and God better?

Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on self-awareness? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.



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