



## Loving People vs. Making Them Happy [Ephesians 4:15, Matthew 5:37, John 1:19]

### *Exercise*

Share a couple of *maxims* that you directed at someone or was directed at you-- share the context as well.

Examples of *maxims*:

- You should get married before you're 30.
- Married people call each other when they know they're going to come home late.
- Of course, you should definitely send your kids to a tutor so they can get into a good school.
- Manhattan is where you need to live, if you work there.
- You should help me with the housework.
- You shouldn't call people so late at night.

**Brainstorm with the group to figure out a way of expressing the same thing using the first-person and in terms of your feelings.**

A good framework to use is:

- "I feel [emotion] about [triggering situation] because of [reason]." (eg: "I feel stressed about your clothes on the sofa because I don't feel at home in my living room.")

### *Text*

**Ephesians 4:15-16 talks about "speaking the truth in love."**

Why are truthfulness and love so interconnected?

Are there situations when dishonesty might be loving?

What is the relationship between "love" as "making people happy"?

How was Jesus loving or unloving on the cross when he shared with his helpless mother that he was thirsty?

**Matthew 6:1 talks about having no reward from our Father in Heaven, if we claim our reward on earth.**

If we only speak the truth in love when it keeps people happy, but fail to do so when we think they might get upset with us, in what sense is that claiming our reward on earth? What is the reward we're claiming?

### *Community*

**Dan read a story about how Pastor Pete & Geri found it difficult to speak up and be honest while hosting a couple who had travelled all the way from Connecticut to see them.**

Can you relate with Pete's difficulty in speaking up in that situation?

Do you personally have difficulties saying "no" in similar situations where people will probably be disappointed? What allowed Jesus to not struggle with the same difficulties? Is your difficulty related to the concept of "idolatry"?

Can the possibility of our making people upset, angry or disappointed be something God doesn't want for them? Does this inform the way we process our own emotions when we are upset, angry, or disappointed?

Share a story where God used an event that made you upset, angry, or disappointed, to bring you closer to Him.

Jesus probably received hundreds of dinner invitations each evening, but had to decline all of them except one. Imagine if Jesus was the kind of person who was hung up on not disappointing people or upsetting them. How would that have facilitated Jesus burning out from serving God? In what ways is "burn-out" related to caring about how others people view (1) us or (2) the results of our serving? On the flip-side, how would serving be more "carefree" if we didn't care about those sorts of things?

Serving Christ In Our Humanness  
November 15, 2009

Dan talked about becoming overly invested in relationships with friends, family, or church. Name a relationship in your life where you ended up going beyond your capacity to love freely, and ended up giving with a sense of being owed something back or entitled to something in return. Think of those relationships that Jesus invested the MOST time and energy in? Does it seem like he was expecting anything in return? Could that help explain why it was so easy for Jesus to forgive Peter when Peter betrayed Him?

If we make sure that our "yes" is always a free gift that's freely losable, how does that protect us from having long-standing grudges or the inability to forgive others?