

# Connecting Group Study Guide

## *Knowing, Growing, Going*

Week of September 11-17, 2016

### Follow-up

1. Start by checking in with each other about your previous week.

This past Sunday our church family continued with the series “Contagious”. This series has been a reminder that not only are we influenced by the behavior and attitudes of others, but equally our behavior and attitudes have an effect on those around us. One thing we heard about was the psychological reality of “positive illusion”. Essentially positive illusion is what happens when we think we are better at something than we actually are. Have you ever had an experience where you thought you were great at something, only to be humbled later by discovering you are really not as good at that thing as you once thought?

Read Matthew 23:1-12.

### Knowing

In the four Gospels the Pharisees seem to be depicted as negative examples. In our passage from Matthew’s Gospel Jesus confronts the Pharisees, calling them out for their behavior and attitudes.

1. According to Matthew 23:1-7, what are some the “positive illusions” of the Pharisees that Jesus finds concerning?
2. What do you think are some of the obvious dangers associated with these behaviors and attitudes?
3. Have you ever experienced any of these behaviors and attitudes in the church? What effect did it have on you and the church?

### Growing

In this passage Jesus is also preparing his disciples for their leadership role. Since God teaches us in the Bible that all believers are leaders to some degree (cf. 1 Peter 2:5), these words also are applicable to disciples today (that’s us!).

1. How do you think Jesus’ words in Matthew 23:8-10 can act as a correction to our own tendency to give in to “positive illusion”?
2. According to Matthew 23:11-12, what is to be the primary behavior and attitude of a disciple of Christ?

### Going

Interestingly, God never calls to do something or experience something that he has not already done or experienced himself.

1. According to the four Gospels and the New Testament writings, how has Jesus Christ personally lived out this call to humility and a life of servanthood?
2. When has God personally called you to serve another in humility? Is God calling you to serve someone presently in Christ-like love?
3. How can your group live out this principle together? Take some time to brain-storm ideas, thoughts, etc. Keep a list and pray over that list together.

4. From your time in prayer, is God bringing up anything particular for you group? Where is he calling you to serve your community?

Close in Prayer:

Break up into groups of two and pray specifically for one another—ask God to specifically make you aware of how you can be “contagious” in a positive way for those around you.