

FRICITION

Tools For Better Relationships

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

BE COMFORTABLE WITH SILENCE. Uncomfortable silences are bound to happen. It's okay! A long pause during a group discussion can be powerful. A *pause* gives space for quieter people to break into the conversation; silence allows people to figure out exactly what they would like to say.

MASKS OFF: LEADING WITH EMPATHY, TRUTH, & GRACE

ICEBREAKER

What's something people often assume about you that isn't really true? (*Examples: You come off as serious but you're actually really goofy, etc.*)

INTRODUCTION

Hypocrisy can damage trust faster than almost anything else. The truth is, we all fall short at times, wearing masks or acting outside our values to save face or protect ourselves. Most of us don't wear masks to deceive, but to protect ourselves. Fear of judgment, rejection, or conflict can cause us to hide parts of our story or project something we haven't fully grown into yet. This week, we'll look at how to recognize hypocrisy in ourselves and address it in others with empathy, because when people feel safe, real growth can begin.

READ I

So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.
— Matthew 23:27–28 (ESV)

The Greek word for hypocrite is **hypokritēs**, meaning *an actor*. In ancient Greek theater, actors wore large masks so people in the back row could see the character. Hypocrisy is like living behind a mask: appearing one way publicly while living another way privately. Common examples of hypocrisy include:

- Expecting honesty but telling “small” lies

- Wanting grace but giving criticism
- Posting about their faith online but avoiding it real life matters

Jesus spoke strongly about hypocrisy not to shame people, but because **fake faith blocks real change**. Hypocrisy is more than a personal failure because it can misrepresent God to others. That's why Jesus took it so seriously. What you pretend to be eventually prevents who you're meant to become.

In what ways can someone look “right” on the outside while struggling on the inside?

(Example: Wanting to be forgiven without extending forgiveness to others, giving advice freely while ignoring the same issues in their own life, etc.)

READ |

'... Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her... Then neither do I condemn you,' Jesus declared. 'Go now and leave your life of sin.' — John 8:7, 11 (NIV)

The Bible uses the word “hypocrite” 31 times, and Jesus says most of them. Yet **Jesus confronted hypocrisy without crushing people**. In the story of the woman caught in adultery, Jesus first disarmed the accusers, then restored the woman. Public shame in Jesus' time could permanently destroy someone's future. By protecting her dignity, Jesus gave her a path forward, not a label. Grace creates space for growth. Our role is not to change people, but to point them to Jesus and trust Him to do the heart work.

Have you ever been corrected in a way that helped you grow? *(Example: from a coach, parent, or friend who spoke kindly but honestly)*

READ |

Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. — Matthew 12:34 (NIV)

Harsh words can often come from unhealed places such as stress, fear, insecurity, or past wounds. When people don't feel understood or safe, they tend to react defensively. Scripture reminds us that our tone has power: it can escalate conflict or create space for healing.

Share about a time when you or someone you know spoke harshly, and how it affected the situation. Why do you think people sometimes speak or act harshly toward others?

(Example: past hurts, feeling misunderstood or disrespected, fear of vulnerability or loss of control, etc.)

READ |

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?
— Luke 6:41 (NIV)

Truth without empathy hurts; empathy without truth stalls growth. Before confronting someone, Scripture calls us to look inward: *If I confront them about this, is there a similar area in my life that I should be working on? Am I trying to help us both grow, or just point out their flaws? Have I understood their story? Is my tone honoring their dignity?* When people feel validated, they're far more open to correction—and real change can begin.

Which is harder for you: speaking truth with empathy, or receiving it hard truths?

What is one small shift you could make to *lead with empathy* in hard conversations?

(Examples: Asking questions before giving advice, validating feelings before addressing behavior, acknowledging your own flaws, etc.)

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

- Ask God to reveal anything you're hiding or misrepresenting
- Ask God to help you to speak with empathy and a gentle tone
- When hard conversations are needed, lead with compassion before correction

CLOSE IN PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank You that You meet us with both truth and grace. Please give us the courage to remove our masks and the humility to examine our hearts. Teach us to speak truth with empathy, to correct with compassion, and to listen with understanding. Shape our tone so it reflects Your love, and help us create spaces where honesty leads to healing. Clean our hearts from the inside out, so we can better represent You to the world. In Jesus' name, amen.



Make Time to be in God's WORD

Reading God's Word daily re-patterns the way you think & transforms your mind. Doing your daily devotions is an excellent way to record, process, & share what God is teaching you on a personal level. We do this using S.O.A.P.

- S - Scripture**
- O - Observation**
- A - Application**
- P - Prayer**

Here's an example:

S: *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*

--Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

O: Jesus said that we can't live on food alone. Our life is sustained through His Word.

A: Just as food is important to me, God's Word is even more because it will sustain me and give me the strength to live out my life.

P: Jesus, thank You for reminding me that I need Your Word to give me the wisdom & strength to follow You. Help me to make time to spend with You daily. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did. — 1 John 2:6 (NIV)

Day 2:

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. — Psalm 139:23–24 (NIV)

Day 3:

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. — James 1:22-24 (NIV)

Day 4:

We refuse to wear masks and play games. We don't maneuver and manipulate behind the scenes. And we don't twist God's Word to suit ourselves. — 2 Corinthians 4:2 (MSG)

Day 5:

Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. — Luke 12:1-2 (NIV)