

Introduction:

1. Recall a time when you were impressed when someone defused a tense situation by bringing peace into it. How did they do it?
2. What will be your greatest relational joy and your greatest relational challenge on Thanksgiving Day this year?

Understanding:

3. A motivational speaker says “You'll get what you want in life if you stifle your jealous feelings and are kind to people instead of taking advantage of them ”. In what way is this advice biblical? In what way does it totally miss the point?
4. Verse 15 said that one feature of wisdom that is not godly is that it is demonic. In our technological scientific modern society we may overlook the impact of invisible spiritual forces. In Matthew 16 Jesus has just explained that he must go to the cross. Read Matthew 16:22-23. What is the demonic wisdom here? How does it so strongly contradict what God wants? How is this a powerful warning of what happens when we make our own human concerns number one? In what way does it help you take it more seriously when you make your concerns number one?
5. Jesus said in John 15, “If you abide in me, you’re going to bear much fruit.” So it’s still you, but it’s the power and the energy of Christ, working through you, changing what you’re able to bring to the table in all your relationships. Read Matt 11:29. Is bringing in the power of Christ meant to be difficult? Think of a relational situation you're in where you think it all depends on you. How does this change your way of looking at it?
6. Read verse 13 again. Is this verse saying that Bible knowledge is the most important part of being a Christian? If not what is the proper role of Bible knowledge in our living for Christ?
7. Exodus 20 contains the 10 commandments. Read Exodus 20:17. Why do you think envy was important enough to be put in the 10 commandments?
8. You discover that a believer who is an expert on everything the Bible says about family relationships has a home in total disorder. According to today's passage how could you begin to encourage them in a way that order would begin to come into their home?

Application:

9. Think of some recent examples of how things went really well in friends’ lives. If you were honestly able to fully rejoice with them give thanks! But if you know that your real reaction was envy then ask the Lord to begin to change your heart.
10. For most of us, there are relationships in our lives—with our parents or kids or siblings—that we’re just disappointed with—and we wish they were better. We know they’re supposed to be better! It’s not all because of your envy and your selfish ambition. But that’s probably part of it. This week say, “What can I do to make this relationship better?”
11. Tim Keller applied a humble attitude to marriage like this: “If each spouse says to the other, ‘I will treat my selfishness as the main problem in our marriage,’ you have the prospect for great things.” To what degree is that true for you? How can you grow in applying it? (Apply it to your closest relationship if you are not married).