

‘Resistant Hearts and Resting Hearts’ Discussion Guide

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Opening Prayer

Father, thank you for revealing yourself through your Son. Give us humble hearts that are ready to hear your Word. Show us where we have resisted you, and teach us to find true rest in Jesus. Amen.

Read Matthew 11:16-19

Observe

1. What picture does Jesus use to describe “this generation”?
2. What are the children in the marketplace doing?
3. What two kinds of songs are mentioned?
4. How do the other children respond?
5. What accusations are made against John?
6. What accusations are made against Jesus?
7. What statement does Jesus make about wisdom in verse 19?

Interpret

8. Why do you think Jesus compares this generation to children in the marketplace?
9. What do the wedding music and funeral song represent?
10. How are John's ministry and Jesus' ministry different?
11. Why do you think people rejected both John and Jesus, even though their ministries looked so different?
12. What does the accusation that Jesus was "a friend of tax collectors and sinners" reveal about his ministry?
13. How can the very same characteristic be viewed as a criticism by some people and as good news by others?
14. What do you think Jesus means when he says, "Wisdom is justified by her deeds"?

Reflect and Apply

15. Have you ever found yourself resisting God's work simply because it didn't happen the way you expected?
16. Is it easier for you to resist God's correction or God's mercy? Why?

17. How can criticism become a way of avoiding obedience?
18. What are some modern examples of people dismissing God's work because it doesn't fit their expectations?
19. Are there areas where your heart has become more focused on finding faults than recognizing Jesus?

Read Matthew 11:20-24 (Optional Context)

Although these verses are skipped in the lectionary, they connect the two halves of today's reading.

Observe

20. Why does Jesus pronounce woes on Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum?
21. What had these cities witnessed?
22. What was still missing?

Interpret

23. How do these verses strengthen Jesus' description of "this generation"?
24. What is the difference between seeing Jesus' works and responding to Jesus himself?
25. Why do miracles alone not guarantee repentance?

Reflect and Apply

26. Is it possible to become familiar with Jesus while still resisting him?
27. How can religious familiarity become spiritual complacency?

Read Matthew 11:25-27

Observe

28. How does Jesus describe the Father?
29. From whom have these things been hidden?
30. To whom have they been revealed?
31. What has the Father entrusted to the Son?
32. Who truly knows the Father?

Interpret

33. Does Jesus condemn education or thoughtful study in this passage? Why or why not?

34. What is the difference between being "wise and understanding" and being like "little children"?
35. What kind of posture does Jesus commend?
36. What does verse 27 teach us about Jesus' unique relationship with the Father?
37. Why is it significant that Jesus does not simply teach about God but reveals the Father?

Reflect and Apply

38. What attitudes make it difficult to receive God's truth?
39. How does humility open us to God's revelation?
40. What does childlike faith look like without becoming childish?
41. How can we continue growing intellectually while remaining humble before God?

Read Matthew 11:28-30

Observe

42. Who does Jesus invite?
43. What does he promise?
44. What does Jesus tell people to take?
45. What does he tell them to do?
46. How does Jesus describe his own heart?
47. What does Jesus say about his yoke and burden?

Interpret

48. What kinds of burdens might Jesus have in mind?
49. Why is Jesus' invitation personal rather than merely instructional?
50. What is a "yoke," and why would Jesus use that image?
51. How can Jesus offer both discipleship and rest at the same time?
52. What do the words "gentle and lowly in heart" teach us about Jesus?
53. Why do you think Jesus describes his own heart instead of simply describing his authority?

Reflect and Apply

54. What burdens are you carrying that Jesus may never have asked you to carry?
55. What does "coming to Jesus" practically look like this week?
56. Where have you been trying harder instead of coming closer?
57. How have you experienced Jesus' gentleness in your own life?
58. What would it look like to learn from Jesus instead of simply learning about Jesus?

Connecting the Whole Passage

59. How does the contrast between resistant hearts and resting hearts help you understand this passage?
60. What characteristics define a resistant heart?
61. What characteristics define a resting heart?
62. Why do resistant hearts often remain restless?
63. How does Jesus move from exposing resistance to offering invitation?
64. What surprises you most about Jesus in this passage?

The Way of Jesus (Overview Questions)

Throughout this series, we have been asking the same five questions.

1. What kind of thing is this?

How does this passage function within Matthew's Gospel? Why do you think Matthew places Jesus' invitation to rest immediately after exposing resistant hearts?

2. Where am I in the story?

Do you identify more with the crowd, the critics, the "wise," the "little children," or the weary who are invited to come?

3. What echoes does this text carry?

What Old Testament themes or earlier passages in Matthew do you hear echoed here? (John the Baptist, Isaiah's promises, Jeremiah's "rest for your souls," wisdom literature, etc.)

4. What does this reveal about God and King Jesus?

What does this passage reveal about the Father's heart? What does it reveal about Jesus' authority, compassion, gentleness, and invitation?

5. How is this forming me into the way of Jesus?

Where is Jesus inviting you to stop resisting and start resting? What would it look like to take his yoke this week?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you that you do not simply point us toward rest, you invite us to yourself. Forgive us for the ways we resist your voice, criticize your work, or cling to our own control. Give us humble hearts that receive what the Father reveals, and teach us to walk under your gentle yoke. May we find true rest for our souls as we follow you. Amen.