

The background of the entire page is a dense, repeating pattern of botanical illustrations. The designs include various types of ferns, some with intricate, feathery fronds, and other leafy plants with different textures and shapes. The color palette is limited to shades of teal, light green, and a golden-yellow, all set against a solid black background. The illustrations are scattered across the page, creating a rich, textured effect.

Cultivate

Growing through the Beatitudes

MAY 19-21, 2018

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Righteousness

This week we're learning about God's righteousness, our unrighteousness, and how Jesus alone can bridge that divide.

FIRST WATCH THE VIDEO

NorthlandChurch.net/Studies

Afterward have someone read the discussion questions in the "Hear God's Story" section and start the conversation.



Share Your Story

Begin by praying together. This should be a brief, simple prayer in which you invite God to give you insight as you study. You can pray for specific requests at the end of your time together or stop momentarily to pray if a particular situation comes up during your discussion.

Then begin your time together by discussing the following questions.

- What are the standards you judge yourself against?
- How do you handle missing those standards?

Hear God's Story and Create a New Story

READ MATTHEW 5:6 (NIV) & ROMANS 3:20-28 (NLT)

- What's a common practice we adopt to try and be "right" with God that the Scripture tells us will not make us righteous?
- How can we be made right with God again and experience real righteousness in our lives?
- Romans 3:23 tells us, "We all fall short of God's glorious standard" (NLT). What is the glorious standard of God? What are some of the ways that you fall short of that standard?
- How have you better understood God's glorious standard and ideal over your faith journey?
- How does God make sinners right in His sight, even though we fall short of His standard? Why does God work so hard to provide for people such as us?
- What was the sacrifice that Jesus had to make for each of our sins?
- What's different for you in knowing you're made right with God through faith instead of through adherence to a code of conduct?
- Whom can you invite into the freedom of righteousness through a relationship with Jesus? What are some first steps of faith you could invite that person to?

Give each person an opportunity to share prayer requests.

Find Your Story in God's Story

If you feel God is nudging you to go deeper, take some time between now and our next discussion to dig into His Word. Explore the Bible passages related to this session's theme on your own, jotting your reflections in a journal or in this study guide. Want to go deeper? Select a few verses and try paraphrasing them: writing them in your own words. If you like, share them with the group the next time you meet.

Usually we think of righteousness in comparative terms. Therefore a righteous, noble and good person is someone who is more righteous than others. And an unrighteous or bad person is simply someone whose mistakes are worse – or perhaps just more visible – than the rest of society's. But real righteousness isn't based on people; it's based on God and His glorious standard of holiness. When we acknowledge God's righteousness, we realize our comparative system is really just a mechanism to keep us from having to admit that in comparison with God, none of us are truly righteous.

READ PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11 (NLT)

- What are the traits and behaviors in Paul's life that tempted him to think he might be righteous of his own accord?
- What are the traits and behaviors in your life that tempt you to think you could achieve or maintain righteousness on your own? How can you "no longer count on [your] own righteousness" (v. 9)?
- How can your group or community help you embrace righteousness through faith, even in your areas of strength?

READ 1 TIMOTHY 1:12-17 (NIV)

- In this passage, Paul highlights his weakness instead of the strengths he emphasized in Philippians. What are Paul's struggles that God had to redeem so that Paul could be restored to a right relationship with God?
- What are your areas of struggle where God had to show you mercy, to restore you?
- Is it harder for you to accept that God's righteousness comes through grace alone in your areas of strength or in your areas of weakness? How can your group or community help you walk in more faith in both areas?

Looking for more questions and reflections so you can keep digging deeper? There's even more to this week's study available on Northland's apps or at NorthlandChurch.net/Studies.