



WEEK 4 DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Me That No One Else Can See

The Responsibles, Part 4 | Rich Barrett

Intro: Jesus' warning begins with a simple problem: things can look a whole lot better on the outside than they really are. The house with fresh wallpaper hid wet, crumbling walls. The amazing ET cake looked incredible but tasted like wax. The skier can have all the gear and no idea. The point is not hard to miss: outward appearance can cover up what is broken underneath.

God chose Abraham and Israel so the world could see how good God is, not so Israel could show off how good Israel was. The religious leaders lost the plot. Their religion became a way to impress people with their own goodness, while greed, self-indulgence, pride, and corruption sat underneath the surface. Jesus calls that hypocrisy. They say and do not.

1. Look Beneath the Surface

1. **Read:** Have someone read Matthew 23:25-28 and Proverbs 4:23.
2. **Observe:** In Matthew 23:25-26, what outward action do the Pharisees focus on, and what does Jesus say is still present inside?
3. **Observe:** What picture does Jesus use in Matthew 23:27-28 to show the difference between a beautiful appearance and a corrupt interior?
4. **Observe:** According to Proverbs 4:23, what connection is made between the heart and the direction of a person's life?

2. Let God Change the Heart

1. **Reflect:** Why is Jesus' command to clean the inside first not a dismissal of outward obedience, but a challenge to let outward faithfulness grow from a changed heart?
2. **Reflect:** Jesus speaks sharply to religious leaders who looked faithful while hiding sin. Why is pride that refuses honesty especially dangerous, while repentance opens the way for mercy?
3. **Reflect:** How can religious activity, moral behavior, or serving others become a way of drawing attention to personal goodness rather than pointing people to God's goodness?

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3. Surrender Every Room

1. **Apply:** Is there any resentment, bitterness, fear, jealousy, selfish ambition, or hidden habit that has been given a small “room” in your heart? What would it mean to name it honestly before Jesus this week?
2. **Apply:** What is one part of life that feels like a locked closet: conversations, media habits, finances, relationships, thought life, or something else? What makes that area difficult to surrender to Christ?
3. **Apply:** What could a simple daily practice of “cleaning the inside first” look like before the day begins - for example, sitting quietly, opening the hands, confessing honestly, and surrendering specific concerns to God?
4. **Apply:** Think about a recent wrong action, harsh word, or unhealthy choice. Looking back, when might the heart have first begun making room for it? What step could help interrupt that pattern earlier next time?

Closing Reflection: The Responsibles take responsibility for more than the past and the future. They take responsibility for “the me that no one else can see.” That means paying attention to resentment, bitterness, secret habits, selfish motives, and the thoughts that quietly make room for future sin. Soul care means coming before God with open hands, surrendering the hurts, the fears, the kids, the job, the finances, and every hidden room of the heart.

Christ does not want access to only the presentable rooms. Christ calls for the title of the whole house. Integrity means an integrated life, where the private heart and public life are no longer miles apart. When Jesus cleans the inside of the cup, the outside becomes a real benefit to the people around it.

Outro: Complete this sentence: “This week, I will open my heart to Jesus by _____.”

Prayer: Jesus, help us take responsibility for the me that no one else can see. Reveal what needs to change, give us courage to surrender every room of our hearts, and let our lives point to your goodness. Amen.