



DISCUSSION GUIDE

AMOS: God Has No Favorites, part 1

GETTING STARTED

Discuss why it is so difficult for us to be “objective” when we make decisions, or make judgments?
Why is it so important to be impartial when deciding what is just, right, or fair?
In what ways can our “religious observance” become offensive to God?

QUICK REACTIONS FROM THE MESSAGE

How would you summarize/paraphrase the message in your own words?
What point/idea resonated most with you? Why?

In Amos chapter 8 Dave gave us three ways our “religious observances” can become an offense to God...

1. You love gain more than God (vv. 1-5)
2. You value profit more than honesty (vv.5-6)
3. You advantage yourself by disadvantaging others (vv. 6-7)

How do you see these “OT” problems as problems today?

What attribute or character of God expresses why this is an outrage to God?

In what ways is it easy to slip into a surface spirituality that looks good, but underneath is rotten fruit?

In what way does the “cross” answer the tension between God’s wrath/anger at sin, but also His love and mercy?

EXPLORE THE PASSAGE [Amos 8:1-7]

(Yes, these questions can seem silly, however, good discussion and interpretation of the Bible begins with having a proper understanding of the basic facts; who, what, when, and where in the text.) Work through this quickly, the answers are fairly obvious.

What was the horror of Amos’s vision of ripe fruit? (8:1-3)

Why would there be unprecedented mourning in the land? (8:4-10)

What would characterize God’s silence toward Israel? (8:11-14)

QUESTIONS THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEXT

What does the term “Sovereign Lord” mean?

In what way is how we treat those who are helpless tied to authentic faith, particularly in verse 4-5? Why is this so important to our Sovereign Lord?

What do we lose when we forget that all we have comes from God?

Why is authentic faith tied to how we treat others in the marketplace, our jobs, our work, our homes? (v. 5-6)

How can the world's standard of seeing people as a means to an end creep into our life with God?

A good definition of "injustice" is when we begin to advantage ourselves by disadvantaging others. This appears to be what is going on in Israel, verse 6-7.

How do you see this happening today in our world, our churches, in us?

In what way do you see what Christ has done for us in direct opposition to this kind of attitude or behavior?

In what way does God's justice and mercy help us grow in our love for God, rather than turn away from God?

APPLY THE PASSAGE

What do we learn about God and about ourselves in this passage?

What do you need to stop, start or do differently as a result of reading this passage?

How can we pray for each other?