

THE BIG IDEA: Filters change how we see what we see.

The Take-Off

The series that we're beginning this morning needs some explanation before we start

- One, it's topical (meaning we're looking at what the Bible says about a specific topic)
- Two, we don't want to just pick verses and make them fit the topic (people do this ALL the time)
- Three, it's coming from the pastor's heart in me in response to a prompting of the Spirit to deal with a topic
- Four, grace will be required in the teaching and receiving as we navigate the topic

What's the topic? Filters.

1. How filters work

- a. We live in a very filtered world and there are all kinds of filters
- b. Let me show you a few
 - Some filters keep things out, like air filters or coffee filters
 - Photography filters block colors, hues, etc. and produce a different picture
 - [IMAGES Photo filters]
 - Other filters modify a picture and create a different perspective
 - Someone used a child filter on the characters from The Office - it's a great example of this
 - [IMAGES Office filters]
 - Then there are filters that overlay an image for effect
 - Recently a lawyer showed the world how this type of filter works
 - [CLIP Cat lawyer]
- c. A couple statements about filters before we jump into some teaching:
 - Some filters are good, some filters are bad and some filters are probably neutral
 - But every filter does the same thing: **filters change how we see what we see**
- d. This is really important: filters don't change what we see
- e. They change how we interpret what we see

2. Realize that we all have filters

- a. Let me give you a quick example - Dr. James Dobson tells this story about working in a mental health facility with a patient who believed he was dead
- b. Dr. Dobson pricking the patient's finger and showing him the blood - "Dead men DO bleed!"
- c. This man had a filter (I'm dead) that informed how he processed what he saw
- d. The hard part about filters - and the challenge for this series - is that so often **our filters are invisible to us but obvious to others**
- e. This is why we need the Spirit to open our eyes to our filters!
 - Phil. 1:9-10 (NIV) / Paul's prayer was for INSIGHT so they could DISCERN accurately
 - John 16:13 (NIV) / The Spirit will lead us into truth about ourselves and our filters
- f. My first prayer is that we would **realize that we all have filters.**
- g. That alone will be a game changer for us because it opens the door to communicate better!
- h. Proverbs 15:23 (NLT) / this is possible when we understand the filters in place for us and them

3. Recognize the danger of filters

- a. The reason it's so critical to realize we all have filters is that if we don't, we could fail to **recognize the danger of filters**
- b. Look at these innocent pictures using what we'll call beauty filters
- c. [IMAGES Beauty filters]
- d. They seem harmless - and they may be - but plastic surgeons are now seeing a huge increase in people bringing in perfectly filtered pictures of themselves and requesting surgery to make it permanent
- e. One woman showed a doctor her filtered picture and he said "it was flawless - without a single marking of a normal human face."
- f. The danger of filters is that they blur the lines of reality
- g. It happens spiritually, too

- h. Think about how the filter of offense can blur reality
- i. At first you're offended by one person, but left unchecked, you begin to think everyone is against you.
- j. Instead of challenging that lie, you run with it. Before long, seeing 2 people whispering means that they MUST be talking about you.
- k. Your filter has become permanent and blurred reality.

4. Remove and replace the filters

- a. As we go through this series, I'm asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to all of us the filters we use
- b. **Romans 12:3 (NLT)** / we need to see ourselves for who we really are
- c. We'll take the rest of the series to learn how and why we need to **remove and replace the filters**
- d. I'm sure the Spirit will show you filters other than these, but here's a short list of filters that need to be removed from believers' life:
 - Shame
 - Pride
 - Religion
 - Racism
 - Fear
 - Offense
 - Politics
 - Victim mentality
 - Poverty mentality

The Landing

Again, the Spirit is so good to highlight for each of us what He wants to remove and replace, but for now, can we simply accept the fact that filters change how we see what we see and end by reading out loud together **Psalm 139:23-24 from The Message** translation?

Let's make this our prayer for the entire series and beyond.
Let's pray.