

# Guardrails

## Yeast of...

**Growing in both *grace* and *truth* acts as a guardrail on the narrow road of following Jesus (Mark 8:14-21).** Jesus warns His followers to *watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod* (Mark 8:15). Jesus is saying that there are small, subtle yet sinful ideas and beliefs that can carry significant influence in our hearts and run us off the narrow road that leads to life. The yeast of Herod represents the idea that we get to decide what is true for us. It minimizes or even rejects God's truth. It dismisses temptation and sin, and anyone who calls out sin is being judgmental. The yeast of the Pharisees emphasizes external rules and behaviors. It looks down on others in pride, which ultimately leads to hypocrisy. Walking in both grace and truth guard against either of these extremes. Those growing in grace and truth know God as holy *and* forgiving, hate sin immensely *and* love people radically, and want to be like Jesus *and* know it can only happen by God's power at work in them.

### GET THINGS STARTED

What is that one thing or area that you are most careful with? What do you do to safeguard that one thing or area, to carefully protect it? What does it look like to safeguard your most important relationships?

### GO DEEPER

1. In Mark 8:15, why did Jesus choose to specifically use the image or idea of yeast? What is He teaching with the image of yeast when it comes to Herod and the Pharisees?
2. What were the apostles of Jesus not understanding or perceiving in Mark 8:17-21 when Jesus referenced the feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand? Why is this significant, and what does it mean for us today?
3. From Matthew 14:3-8, what compromise and sin of Herod Antipas – that we are warned against by Jesus – did John the Baptist challenge and was ultimately martyred for?
4. According to Matthew 23:27-28, why did Jesus so strongly rebuke the Pharisees and teachers of the law? What was their dangerous and sinful ideology that Jesus confronts and warns us about?

### MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. When looking at the philosophies and behaviors embraced by Herod or the Pharisees, which do you personally lean towards? Are you more likely to err on the side of grace and compromise at the expense of God's truth, or to err on the side of external rule keeping and performance at the expense of grace and a transformed heart?
2. How well are you growing in grace *and* truth together? What might be your next step in walking in a healthy balance of these two principles? Which of the following comes most naturally for you, and which is most challenging:
  - a. Knowing God as holy AND forgiving.
  - b. Hating sin immensely AND loving people radically.
  - c. Wanting to be like Jesus AND knowing it can only happen by His power at work in you.

### PRACTICE IT NOW

**As a group, purposefully pray together and ask God for an ever-increasing capacity to live in grace and truth.** Ask Him for the courage to confess and repent where you have stepped into being like Herod or the Pharisees. Ask God to remove the yeast of that idea from your heart and mind. And ask Him for the grace and truth combination that you lack the most or find particularly difficult.