Session 6: What Can We Do? (Part 2)

SESSION GOALS

Every session has specific goals—things you want your group to walk away knowing, feeling, and committing to do.

Main Idea: Our foundation rests in Christ, in whom we share our identity.

Head Change: To focus on our common identity in Christ.

Heart Change: To intentionally approach each situation with a posture of peace.

Life Change: To imitate the example of peacemaking that Jesus provided.

OPEN

Disagreements can come quickly, almost without warning. When have you seen a disagreement suddenly arise? Have you ever been able to diffuse a disagreement?

Toxic polarization can sometimes come because people avoid conflict. They do not want to be the in-group moderator. Instead, they retreat while maintaining disagreement. When group disagreement occurs, we may wonder, are there ways to bring the group back together that will help connect each person with one another?

As the in-group moderator, it can be challenging to both stand up for what is right and be a peacemaker. But that's exactly what Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 3.

In this session, Brandon Cleaver discusses a path to bring our group together in unity through the actions modeled by our Savior.

READ

Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-11.

WATCH

Before viewing the session, here is something important to look for in Brandon Cleaver's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following question:

What makes toxic polarization thrive?

Show Session 6: What Can We Do?-Part 2 (7 minutes).

DISCUSS Brandon discusses the importance of the in-group moderator as one who calls out wrongdoing, but also speaks out for what is right. How have you experienced these aspects of being an in-group moderator? A PEACEMAKER FINDS A SHARED IDENTITY IN CHRIST Sometimes the job of an in-group moderator means bringing one another together by emphasizing our shared identity. For Christians, why does a common identity in Christ matter? Paul addresses this identity issue within the church in Corinth. These believers had been battling feelings of jealousy. What does Paul remind them of in verse 11? This passage is a beautiful vision of how we are all connected together as the church. How does verse 9 describe believers? How have you seen our shared identity in Christ bring peace within a group? Why does focusing on Christ as our foundation create peace? A PEACEMAKER IMITATES CHRIST TO OTHERS. We all have different styles of learning, whether visual, auditory, writing/reading, or kinesthetic. What is your learning style? One of the best ways to learn is by imitating what someone else models. In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul tells the church in Corinth to imitate him, just as he imitates Christ. Brandon points out that modeling positive norms is important "because so much of our discipleship is caught rather than taught." From the time of infancy, we tend to learn best by modeling the behaviors of others. How has observing the behavior of others been helpful to you on your spiritual journey? Who has been a model for your spiritual growth? Modeling positive norms is exactly what we should do, but when negative becomes the norm, that's when our in-group moderator should kick in. It should trigger that red flag within warning us of the things that we do not want to imitate. Paul talks about being convicted of a certain way of eating in 1 Corinthians 8. When we encounter disagreements within our group, we know not everything is black and white. As Brandon says, "When we see this black and white thinking fueling conflict, we can complicate their narrative by reintroducing some of that complexity." In other words God often convicts some Christians to live in a way that other Christians do not feel called to live. We need to be sensitive to the convictions of others. Have you experienced a conviction that others have not? Or have you encountered convictions in others that you believe God has not called you to live by? Being a peacemaker means being sensitive to others. We sometimes have to do what Brandon calls "complicating the narrative." How would you answer his question. "When faced with some of these situations, how can you introduce other Christian values and convictions into the conversation?' Note: for a more in depth look at convictions, see the Go Deeper section at the end of this study. A PEACEMAKER REAFFIRMS OUR SHARED HOPE IN CHRIST Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 As Brandon mentions, the church in Corinth was a deeply divided church. Paul worked to mend their differences many times within his first letter. He did so again in this passage by talking about the crucifixion, resurrection, and the eyewitnesses who saw Him in the days that followed. Why do you think Paul focused on these things? We have been reminded several times during this series where our focus should be, both in daily life and amid conflict. Why should our gaze always remain on Jesus?

Our fleshly desires often take over quite often, and when that happens, we lose sight of our Savior. How does returning our focus on Him realign our thinking?

How does shifting our focus during conflict within our group to the hope we have in Jesus transform our mindset?

LAST WORD

Conflict within our group can stir up many emotions. Our fleshly desires can tug very hard, and we can lose sight of our shared identity in Christ. Sensitivity to the convictions of others can complicate the narrative, but that's what we are called to do.

As we imitate Christ's behavior to others, we should focus on the hope that we all have in Him. His gift of salvation brings us eternal life in Him and, if we choose to accept it, gives us eternity with our heavenly Father.

GO DEEPER

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material. We've highlighted a place where each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide.

But you can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting.

Convictions

Read 1 Corinthians 8

Being convicted of our sin happens when we are faced with our wrongdoings. We then can make the choice to repent of that sin (John 16:8).

Sin vs. righteousness is a black-and-white issue, but Paul talks about another type of conviction that is selective. God will sometimes call us to live in a way that He doesn't call others to live. We see this presented in 1 Corinthians 8.

- What was the topic that he was discussing in verse 7?
- Would eating the food actually keep anyone from being permanently separated from God?
- Why does God sometimes call some to live in a certain way, but not others?
- In what way can we help people in our group who are living within the standard of certain convictions?
 Paul uses a phrase in verse 9 to identify those who are a temptation to people struggling to uphold their
- convictions. What is it?
- Is this act a sin? Why or why not?
- How does this type of conviction can increase spiritual growth?