

## LIFE GROUP NOTES:

### SERIES: Disciple

### PART THREE: Them & Us

*I can hardly believe the report about the sexual immorality going on among you—something that even pagans don't do. I am told that a man in your church is living in sin with his stepmother. 2 You are so proud of yourselves, but you should be mourning in sorrow and shame. And you should remove this man from your fellowship.*

*3 Even though I am not with you in person, I am with you in the Spirit. And as though I were there, I have already passed judgment on this man 4 in the name of the Lord Jesus. You must call a meeting of the church. I will be present with you in spirit, and so will the power of our Lord Jesus. 5 Then you must throw this man out and hand him over to Satan so that his sinful nature will be destroyed and he himself will be saved on the day the Lord returns.*

*6 Your boasting about this is terrible. Don't you realize that this sin is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough? 7 Get rid of the old "yeast" by removing this wicked person from among you. Then you will be like a fresh batch of dough made without yeast, which is what you really are. Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us 8 So let us celebrate the festival, not with the old bread of wickedness and evil, but with the new bread of sincerity and truth. When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. 11 I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people.*

*12 It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. 13 God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you." 1 Cor 5:1-13*



## INTRODUCTION

People who aren't followers of Jesus and don't consider themselves Christians often expect more of us than we expect of ourselves. They say we don't act like Jesus would. So there's a tension. Walter Isaacson, in his Biography of Apple founder, Steve Jobs, includes this observation from Jobs: "The juice goes out of Christianity when it becomes too based on faith rather than on living like Jesus or seeing the world as he saw it."

Jesus said the defining characteristic of those who follow him is how they love one another- not simply what they believe. It's a challenging assignment. When Jesus gave it to us (John 13:34-35), he was speaking primarily of loving those within the Jesus community.

But how should followers of Jesus treat people who aren't Jesus followers- those who are outside of the faith?

## DISCUSSION STARTER

When it comes to Christians judging those who are not Christians, what has been your experience- either as the one judging or the one being judged?

In your church and perhaps other churches in your community, to what extent have you seen Christians wrongly judging those who are not followers of Jesus?

## MESSAGE SUMMARY

At the end of Jesus earthly ministry, as the followers of Jesus were gathered on a hillside, Jesus gave them their marching orders. "Go and make **DISCIPLES** (Matt.28:19). He didn't say, "Go and make **CHRISTIANS**." His closest followers obeyed his command and developed Jesus communities. They lived their lives and spoke about Jesus in such a way that others were drawn to him and became his followers as well. This movement grew dramatically for the first 300 years. Then the Roman Empire adopted Christianity as it's official religion, and things went downhill. Now the church had earthly power. Many decided not to use love anymore, but to leverage other things. So the marching orders started to sound like this: "Therefore go and impose Christian teachings, values, and worldview on everyone." That was the message of a group in control, but it wasn't the message of Jesus.

Anytime a church uses anything other than love, we go backwards, not forwards, in our influence.

Earlier, Jesus followers had understood that their goal was to **WIN** others to the faith. Paul was the ultimate example of this. He wanted to create Jesus followers out of people who had no interest in that- people who had their own religion and way of life and were not looking to change.

Here was Paul's approach: *"Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to WIN as many as possible."* (1 Cor. 9:19). He didn't power-up or become judgmental; rather he made himself the slave of others in order to win them. When he was around gentiles, he became like a gentile to win them to Christ. Paul knew this was the only way to cause others to become followers of Christ.

We learn more about Paul's approach in **1 Cor.5** (see above). In addressing a situation of sexual misconduct by a man who was a part of the church at Corinth, Paul stated that while we should not distance ourselves relationally from those who are not Jesus followers and whose behaviour we do not agree with, we are to challenge, and even discipline, those inside the Jesus community when their lifestyles are inconsistent with their professed faith and the teaching of the one they have decided to follow (Jesus). We are not to judge outsiders, but we are to judge insiders and hold one another accountable.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) In your community, what expectations do people who aren't Jesus followers have of those who are?
- 2) In what ways do you see Christians trying to use anything other than love to try and influence people or society?
- 3) What are the essential requirements for 'winning over' someone to a whole new way of thinking or living?
- 4) What words and actions and attitudes of Christians cause others to feel threatened or coerced?
- 5) What are the most common ways that Christians come across as judgmental towards those who are not followers of Jesus?
- 6) If we have no business holding unbelievers accountable to the standards of Jesus, how does this free us in the way we relate to them?

## KEY POINTS

- Whenever the church uses anything other than love, we go backward, not forward, in our influence among outsiders.
- The only effective way to help someone find Christ for themselves is to 'WIN' them.
- Followers of Jesus, as part of his church, are given moral standards from God and are to be accountable to them. But we must never seek to impose these standards on those who have not agreed to them. We're to judge insiders, never outsiders.

## Moving Forward

Have you ever been guilty of judging the actions and behaviour of those who aren't followers of Jesus? Do they tend to sense judgement from you instead of love and concern? Do you have a tendency to try and impose your standards on them? Make the decision now to keep others free from any such burden you might want to place on them. Commit yourself to doing whatever it takes to truly 'WIN' them to the love of God.

## Preparing for session 3

To help you prepare- use these suggested devotions during the week leading up to your next life-group.

Read Matthew 5:1-9. What do you see as the main points Jesus is teaching his disciples?

Reflect on Matthew 5:10-12. As we begin to take these teachings more seriously, what effect is it likely to have?

Matthew 5:14-16 paints a word picture. What is he asking us to do, and how can it actually be accomplished?