

**ROTTEN
WEEK ONE**



Week One: Discord / un-Peace

OPENING PRAYER:

Dear Triune God, we marvel at your works in the world and in our hearts. We give thanks for the opportunity to share, pray, learn, and celebrate together. Open our hearts, minds and souls so that we can hear from you through our study and discussion. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen!

ENCOUNTERING GOD:

**Where have you seen God at work in your life this week?
What good have you done for others this week?**

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WEEKLY SCRIPTURE READING:

Read the Devotional pages 20-22 for today's lesson, then read the daily assigned readings before your group meetings. Please read 7-19 if you are just starting your daily readings.

Text: Galatians 5:22-23 & 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

“By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.”

-- and --

“And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? For when one says, ‘I belong to Paul’, and another, ‘I belong to Apollos’, are you not merely human? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building.”

SUMMARY AND CONTEXT:

In Galatians, Paul is addressing the question: can there be moral guidance in absence of the law. Paul's answer is yes, if we walk by the Spirit. Previous missionaries taught the Galatians that the law was necessary to keep the community from descending into moral chaos. Paul believed that the works of the flesh, behaviors that oppose the will of God in favor of our own desires, were obvious. Therefore, the law is not necessary to make us aware of the works of the flesh, nor can the law give us the power to overcome them. Among the works of the flesh that Paul mentions are offenses against the unity of the church. Paul makes the point that the Fruit of the Spirit builds community. The fruit begins with love and ends with self-control. Love sets the tone and is the foundation for community. Self-control keeps the community from descending into chaos because we lay claim to the power to love rather than show apathy, to remain silent or encourage rather than speak words that offend or harm. When we yield to the power of the Spirit in community, we can overcome the flesh.

In 1 Corinthians, the people are fighting over who serves the greatest evangelist. In today's terms, it would be two churches arguing over who has the better pastoral and ministry staff to the point where they begin to bad mouth each other's ministries or become jealous over buildings and attendance numbers. At times, this kind of division occurs within a single church argues about ministry areas, Sunday School classes, attendance numbers, theological differences, gifts, or resources. Paul describes this behavior as acting according to the flesh, or human inclinations. We cannot manufacture fruit or growth, God produces the fruit and gives the growth. We are all servants working for a common purpose of spreading the loving good news of Jesus Christ. The good news is the main thing. When we place our focus on who has the best pastor, who has the better buildings, who has the bigger church or Sunday School class, we lose sight of the main thing. Also, we lose sight of what the Spirit is doing.

GROUP REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Encounter the Head:

What is at the heart of divisiveness? What are our divisions today?

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What gets in the way of our pursuit of unity?

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How do we discern our job, our giftedness?

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Encounter the Heart:

Share how you take an inventory of your own spiritual growth and fruit. What have you learned about yourself? What have you learned about God?

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GROUP REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

How do we “prepare the soil” to plant/harvest peace – aware that peace doesn’t just happen by accident?

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What would/ will happen when we realize our common call to the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

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Encounter the Hands:

Share your prayer concerns and celebrations.

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PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Encounter The Hands:

Please go around the group and have each person share a praise for this week and a prayer request/

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CLOSING PRAYER

Have a volunteer lead closing prayer: asking for prayer concerns and lifting up the needs of the group.

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DAILY REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

We encourage everyone to do a daily reflection. This can be done alone, as a couple, or with your family. This spiritual practice will help answer the questions you have and it will improve your ability to see where God is at work in your life, and in the lives of those around you. Please answer the following questions during your personal devotional time at the end of the day.

Where have you seen God today? For the children, we say, “what made you happy today?”

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What broke your heart or made you sad today?

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What good thing did you do for someone else today?

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What are you thankful for today?

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