



[CANCELLED]

FRACTURED UNITY IN 1 CORINTHIANS

GROUP GUIDE
2nd Quarter, 2023

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UNITY IN 1 CORINTHIANS

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ABOUT

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

Paul the Apostle, 1 Corinthians 1:10

We live in a world where cancel culture runs prevalent. Conflict and disagreement are solved by silencing the opposing voice. But it shouldn't be a surprise to us that a broken world breeds broken relationships.

This problem isn't new to humanity. In writing to the Church in the city of Corinth, the Apostle Paul addressed a series of issues that were causing factions and dissensions. The problem wasn't new - but Paul's solution was.

Join us as we discover Paul's path to reconciliation - a path that moves beyond cancel culture to love.

Ground Rules

Here are some guidelines for your gatherings.

Confidentiality

If the group is going to move towards authenticity, then what's shared in the group should stay in the group (note: for situations that you are not qualified to speak into, use a referral to Cornerstone Counseling).

Don't Rescue and Don't Fix

Let people openly share without trying to solve their problems. Only give advice if they request it.

No Crosstalk

People feel valued when we listen. The opposite is true as well: people will feel devalued if they are constantly interrupted. If someone has the floor, no other conversations should be happening.

Give Everyone a Chance to Share

Everyone has something to contribute and everyone should feel heard. Don't be too quick to provide all of the answers. Give others space to share.

Use Humor Responsibly

Our conversation should build up rather than tear down. Humor can be a great thing provided it is not used as the expense of others.

Use 'I' Statements

Groups are an opportunity for self-reflection. We should be quick to reflect on how what we are studying should shape us personally, and slow to tell others how it should shape them.

Fight for the Relationship

Real relationships only thrive when we commit to 'fight' for the relationship. We will not hide from conflict or disagreement, but will instead discuss them in an open and healthy way.

Leader Guidelines

Thank you for taking the time to invest in others by leading a group. As a leader, your task is to create an environment where real relationships can thrive. Here are some things to keep in mind as you do that:

Multiply.

The mission of the church is to multiply disciples. Groups are one of the environments where this occurs. You are involved in the discipleship of each person in your group. We ask that each of our group leaders has someone who they are equipping to be a disciple-maker.

Create a safe environment.

When we say 'safe', we mean an environment where participants can freely share without feeling belittled or that what they share will get spread beyond the group. When we say 'safe', we also mean a group where participants can encounter Jesus and His plan for their life.

Recognize that your group is unique.

This booklet is designed to be a general guide, but every group is unique. So when you're planning, take into account what does and doesn't work for your group and shape the session to their personalities and needs.

Review the ground rules.

Periodically, remind your group about the ground rules for the group.

Ask lots of questions.

Engaging leaders draw participants into the discussion. Ask many questions and lead your group into self-discovery. Follow the 70/30 rule: your goal should be to talk for less than 30% of the time. If you're going over that, then people in your group are going to feel limited in their ability to engage!

Get feedback.

Improve your group by asking others for feedback.

Seek wise council.

There are some questions you won't be able to answer and some situations you aren't trained to handle. That's OK! Know who your wise council is (whether a coach, minister, or another disciple-maker) and turn to them in your time of need.

For more on this topic, check out *Servant-Leadership Training* and the *CCW Group Leader Training 2.0* resource on RightNow Media.

Before the Session

Prepare for the Session: As a group leader, it's essential to be prepared. Before the group session:

1. **Pray.** God is the one doing the transformation.
2. **Take time to read over the Bible passage.** Write down questions and observations.
3. **Preview the session guide.** Highlight important questions to ask and add your own.
4. **Tap into study resources.** Check outside sources to expand your understanding of the topic. Some recommended resources include: The BibleProject, RightNow Media, and the CCW Resource Center.

During the Session

Share: Take time to review the content from last week. Use this time to check on:

- **Prayer Requests:** Follow up on any prayer requests that were made the previous session.
- **Application and Challenges:** Take time to provide accountability for any goals that the group set the previous week ('This week, I would like to...').

Transition: Introduce the topic (we give you an example each session).

Read It: Read through the Scripture passage. If it's a larger section of scripture, break it into smaller sections and ask questions throughout.

Talk About It: Make sure the passage is understood by:

1. *Retelling* the story in your own words.
2. *Asking review questions.*
3. *Seeking additional questions.* Check to see if your group has additional questions about the passage.

Apply It: The apply it section may have both (a) application questions and (b) challenges. Challenges are real-life ways to put Biblical Truth into effect this week.

Pray Together: Find creative ways to engage your group in prayer.

After the Session

Follow Up: Be present with group members throughout the week by: (1) Reminding them of their application/challenge commitments, (2) Checking in on needs and prayer requests and (3) Finding opportunities to do life together.

Input Group Attendance: Fill out your Group attendance in the ChurchTeams email that you receive.

UNITY IN IDENTITY

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- As a child, what was the worst fight that you ever experienced?
- How do you react to conflict?

Transition

Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

In the Cancelled series, we'll be digging into the book of 1 Corinthians. In this letter, the Apostle Paul addressed a number of issues that were causing conflict in the Church at Corinth. His words in this letter provide an excellent platform for understanding what it means for the Church to be united.

Read It

Scripture reference: **1 Corinthians 1:1 - 17**

Talk About It

- (1 - 3) Who does Paul say he is writing this letter to? What should we keep in mind as we read a letter written to another audience?
- (4 - 9) According to Paul, what are some of the benefits of belonging to Jesus Christ? How did the Corinthians come to know Jesus?
- (10) What is Paul's desire for this church community? How does he describe this unity?
- (11 - 12) What is the first of the conflicts causing division in this community?

- (13) What argument does Paul make to point towards a common unity?
- (14 - 17) What contribution does Paul make towards ending this division?
- Why is it critical for each of us to have commitment to following Jesus Christ instead of some other name?
- How have you seen similar conflicts causing division in the church today? What conflicts would Paul address in the church today?
- What would it look like for our community to pursue an end to division and a commitment to unity? How do you see yourself being involved in that growth?

Weekly Questions:

- What do we learn about unity from our readings?
- What do we learn about being the Church from our readings?

Pray Together

GODLY WISDOM

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- How would you describe the difference between wisdom and intelligence?
- Who has been the wisest person that you've met (not the most intelligent)?

Transition

Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

Another source of contention in the church of Corinth was their use of 'wisdom'. They were judging people and things using the wisdom of the world rather than attempting to view them through a Godly perspective. Paul argues that true wisdom is the result of leaning into the Spirit.

Read It

Scripture reference: **1 Corinthians 1:18 - 2:16**

Talk About It

- (18 - 20) How does Paul describe the 'message of the cross' according to world-shaped wisdom? Why is this so?
- (21 - 24) What looks like wisdom to the Jewish people? What looks like wisdom to the Greek people? Why is the message of Jesus foolishness to both?
- (25) How does Paul describe God's wisdom?
- (26 - 29) What kind of people and things has God chosen to use to proclaim His message? For what reason?

- (30 - 31) What 'boast' do Christ-followers have to make?
- (2:1 - 5) What contribution does Paul make in ending this division?
- (6 - 10) How does Paul describe the 'message of wisdom' that should be given?
- (11 - 13) Where does this 'message of wisdom' come from? How is this wisdom conveyed to others?
- (14 - 16) Who does not accept the things of the Spirit? What does it mean to have the 'mind of Christ'?
- In our community, how might the wrong type of wisdom lead to division?
- How can you recognize when the 'Wisdom of God' is at work in a community?
- How can you be a part of making sure the right kind of wisdom is at work in the church?

Weekly Questions:

- What do we learn about unity from our readings?
- What do we learn about being the Church from our readings?

Pray Together

KINGDOM COWORKERS

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- If you

Transition

Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

In the passage we'll be reading today, Paul continues to expand on his arguments about wisdom, foolishness, and Church leaders. He argues that Kingdom unity is the product of recognizing that we are all kingdom co-workers and that Jesus is at the helm.

Read It

Scripture reference: **1 Corinthians 3:1 - 4:6**

Talk About It

- (1 - 3) Why does Paul view the Corinthians as 'spiritual infants'?
- (4 - 5) What is the issue causing quarrelling and dissension in the church community?
- (6 - 8) According to Paul, what role do humans have in God's Kingdom? What does God do that no human can?
- (9) What metaphors does Paul use to describe the Church? How might understanding these metaphors shape how we view one another?
- (10 - 15) What kind of foundation should the church be built on? What should it not be built on? What will happen to

those who build with the wrong foundation?

- (16 - 17) How does the church community being 'God's temple' stress the sacred responsibility that Christ-followers have?
- (18 - 20) Why does Paul urge us the Corinthians to aspire to 'foolishness'?
- (21 - 23) What does Paul mean when he claims that 'all things are yours'?
- How have you seen an overreliance on personality cripple church community?
- Paul uses multiple metaphors for the church in this passage: God's fellow workers, God's field, God's building, God's temple. How do these images change how we should view ourselves and others in the church community?
- The wisdom of our age often places influence, prominence and power on the few. What are some ways that a church community might guard against this sort of 'wisdom'?
- What would it look like in your own life to become the type of 'fool' that Paul speaks of?

Weekly Questions:

- What do we learn about unity from our readings?
- What do we learn about being the Church from our readings?

Pray Together

RECONCILING HEARTS

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- What was the best apology that you have ever received? What made that apology memorable?

Transition

Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

If Christ-followers are to avoid being a people of disunity, then reconciliation is something that we have to be really good at. In the passage that we'll be reading, we'll discover how a lack of healthy reconciliation was leading to a fractured church in Corinth.

Read It

Scripture reference: **1 Corinthians 5:9 - 6:11**

Talk About It

- (5:9 - 11) How should Christ-followers react to sinful people who are non-Christians? How should they react to people participating in sin inside of the church?
- (12 - 13) Whose responsibility is it to judge those outside of the church? What form of judgement should be used within the church?
- (6:1) What divisive issue is Paul addressing in this passage?
- (2 - 6) What leads Paul to believe that interpersonal issues should be dealt with inside of the church community? Who should Christ-followers turn to when seek-

ing judgement to an argument?

- (7 - 8) According to Paul, how are lawsuits between believers a sign of fractured community? What attitudes should Christ-followers have in the midst of conflict?
- (9 - 11) Who will not be inheritors of the Kingdom of God? What change has come over believers to make them something different?
- How have you seen poorly handled conflict become divisive in the midst of church community?
- What are some of the challenges that would have to be overcome for a church to handle conflict internally?
- How can you handle conflict in a healthy way that leads to unity with fellow Christ-followers?

Weekly Questions:

- What do we learn about unity from our readings?
- What do we learn about being the Church from our readings?

Pray Together

FREEDOM & COMPASSION

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- How do you react when your ideas or opinions are challenged?

Transition

Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

The challenge of community is that it is full of people with different perspectives and convictions. Because of the grace that we've received through Jesus, we don't have to be people who are living by laws. But as Paul explains in the passage today, abusing freedom is a quick path to disunity.

Read It

Scripture reference: **1 Cor. 8:1 - 13, 10:23 - 33**

Talk About It

- (1 - 3) According to Paul, having knowledge can lead to what issue? How is having love different?
- (4 - 7) What knowledge was causing division in the church at Corinth? How does Paul describe the relationship between God and idols?
- (8) What is the 'truth' about food sacrificed to idols?
- (9) What is Paul's solution to the division in the church at Corinth? What might this principle mean?
- (10 - 13) Paul breaks down how the food knowledge was leading to brokenness

in the Corinthian church. Why was this behavior a sin? How does Paul respond to the possibility of this sin in his own life?

- (10:23 - 24) What should be the attitudes that guide our 'freedoms' and actions?
- (25 - 30) What are some of the pragmatic applications of this principle that Paul provides to the 'food' issue?
- (31 - 33) How should our freedoms be viewed?
- We may not have issues with food offered to idols, but we have other 'freedoms' that sometimes cause disunity. What are some freedoms that are divisive in our day?
- As a group, pick a divisive freedom. Attempt to come up with some solutions based on the principles that Paul applies in this passage.
- What do you find challenging in Paul's argument that we should seek 'the good of the many'?
- Are there any freedoms that you find yourself personally valuing over unity in the church?

Weekly Questions:

- What do we learn about unity from our readings?
- What do we learn about being the Church from our readings?

Pray Together

Session Six

LOVE IS THE ANSWER

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- What's your favorite love song?

Transition

Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

If we are to be a people committed to unity, then there are some biblical values that must be central to who we are. In the middle of his letter addressing the Corinthian's disunity, Paul introduces an idea that completely reshapes our interaction with one another: love.

Read It

Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

This session is going to be a little different than the previous, because we're going to practice some guided meditation together. This is how it works:

- *We start with prayer; asking God to speak to us thru what we're about to read.*
- *We will minimize distractions by turning off phones and creating a quiet space (this may include dimming the lights).*
- *You will close your eyes as I slowly read over the following Scripture.*
- *We will have one minute of silence as we strive to listen to God. Try to hold on to a phrase or idea that sticks with you from what we've read.*
- *I will read over the Scripture a second time.*

- *We will have a second minute of silence.*
- *I will read over the Scripture a final time.*
- *We will go to God in prayer, thanking Him for what He has revealed to us.*

This may be different than other ways that you have interacted with Scripture, but it's a practice that is firmly rooted in Christian practices throughout the centuries.

Read: **1 Corinthians 13:1 - 13**

Apply It

- What were some specific words or phrases in these passages that resonated with you?
- What do you feel that God is saying to you through the Scripture that we meditated on?
- How will you live out this message from God this week?

Pray Together

ART OF LISTENING

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- What is a quality or ability that you have that you've used to build up other people?

Transition

Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

With love acting as the guide, Paul addresses a final issue in the church of Corinth: the use of spiritual gifts. These gifts were intended to build up the church community; but the Corinthians used them divisively.

Read It

Scripture reference: **1 Corinthians 14:1 - 33**

Talk About It

- (1 - 5) Paul describes to spiritual gifts in this passage. What is the purpose of tongues? What is the purpose of prophecy? For what reason does Paul desire that believers put the emphasis on prophecy?
- (6 - 9) What analogy does Paul give in comparison to speaking in tongues? How does this reinforce the need for interpretation of tongues?
- (10 - 12) What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?
- (13 - 19) Why does Paul argue that both mind and spirit are valuable when using the gift of tongues?
- (20 - 21) Why does Paul admonish the Corinthian church?

- (22 - 25) What is the product of an outsider encountering tongues? What is the product of an outsider encountering prophecy?
- (26 - 32) Paul gives some pragmatic advice in how these gifts can be used in the Church without creating division. What are some of the applications he gives about tongues? Prophecy?
- (33) How does Paul describe God? How does Paul's understanding of God shape his worship of God?
- How can we be people who 'keep in step with the Spirit' while still creating a worship culture of peace and order?
- What gifts or practices do you have a challenging time valuing?
- How can you use your gifting to edify or grow our church community?
- How can you grow in appreciation of other giftings and learn to value their contribution to the community?

Weekly Questions:

- What do we learn about unity from our readings?
- What do we learn about being the Church from our readings?

NOTE: This chapter might raise a lot of questions about spiritual gifts. If any of the individuals in your group want to dig further into their personal gifting, point them to the SHAPE guide at the Next Step Station or online at ccw.church/discover-your-shape.

Pray Together

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **RIGHTNOW MEDIA**

Get a free RightNow Media account to get access to thousands of study resources. Some potential resources include:

- **The Book of 1 Corinthians** (Jennie Allen): Christianity calls us to sacrifice instead of living for oneself. We have to choose one or the other—we can't do both. The Christians in Corinth tried to live the Christian life in a worldly way. Paul wrote the letter of 1 Corinthians to a divided and self-centered people to remind them to follow Jesus and only Jesus. In this 12-part series, author and speaker Jennie Allen walks into the messy lives of the Corinthians and takes us through Paul's words to the conflicted church. We'll see how the truth of the gospel and the Spirit of God can empower us to choose to follow Jesus every day of our lives.
- **One** (Dennis Rouse): As Christians we are members of one spiritual family, pursuing one God, redeemed and rescued by one Savior. But we're also from different races and different cultures, and we're influenced by a world that is marked by division. How should the church respond? What is our role as followers of Christ? In this four-session study, led by Pastors Dennis and Colleen Rouse, you'll learn how our reconciliation with God through Christ equips us to be the voice of reconciliation in our world, how we can grow in freedom from prejudice, how to engage in politics, and how to show love in our daily lives. With biblical teaching and honest conversation, "ONE" will help your church discuss the tough issues of race and culture in ways that honor God and build unity.
- **Forgiving Challenge** (Zach Zehnder): Forgiving Challenge is a 40-Day journey that will lead you to more freedom than you ever thought possible. The Forgiving Challenge Small Group videos are a companion to the 40-day Forgiving Challenge book. Even though the offer of freedom is available to all, many still live in bondage. The key to unlocking your freedom is the forgiveness that Jesus has already won for you. His forgiveness not only assures you of eternal life with Him but offers you an opportunity to live with purpose today. Bring all of your sin, your guilt, and your shame to Jesus and experience this gift of grace in your life. A forgiven person is a forgiving person. So come. Be free.
- **THE BIBLE PROJECT** (www.thebibleproject.com)
The Bible Project offers a variety of amazing resources. These videos expand on many of the ideas that we have touched on in this series.