

Adult Group Study Guide for August 30, 2020

Series: "Us Vs. Them"

Message: "Gentleness Towards Them"

Goal: To use our secret weapon (gentleness, the 8th fruit of the Spirit) to heal divisions.

Key Verse: *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*
- *Ephesians 4:2*

1. We are familiar with sports competitions with team A verses team B, or the arguments in a courtroom between person A v. person B. What happens when we approach human relationships as a sports contest or a legal battle? Is life always about winning and losing?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26. How does Paul describe the diversity within the body of Christ? What is the danger of feeling inferior to others? (vs. 15-17) What is the danger of feeling superior to other people? (v. 21) Why are we better when we are together? What happens when we replace the word 1 *verses* 2 with 1 *and* 2?
3. What contributed to the division between Jews and Gentiles in the Bible? Review the compromise that came out of the council of Jerusalem in Acts 15. Why was it important to consider the needs of both groups of people?
4. Read Ephesians 2:14-22. What is the dividing wall of hostility that needs to be destroyed? Why is it important to think of ourselves as "fellow citizens with God's people" and "members of his household"?
5. Read the story of the arrest of Jesus in Matthew 26:47-56. In John 18:10 we learn that it was Simon Peter who struck the high priest's servant and the servant's name was Malchus. Given the situation they faced, Peter may have felt that he was justified in striking out at those who were arresting Jesus. How did Jesus respond? If you were Malchus, how would this have affected your perception of Jesus, your enemy? How should Christians respond in this age of outrage? How can we earn our right to be heard?
6. Read John 13:34-35. This instruction of Jesus is often labeled as the 11th commandment. How will others know that we are disciples of Jesus? Why is this command so important?
7. Listen to Mary McDonald's arrangement of the Prayer of St. Francis on the You Tube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZABZroCGXTU> performed by the Northern Lights Chorale. This prayer is often associated with Saint Francis of Assisi (c. 1182 – 1226), but the prayer is absent from his writings and has not been traced back further than 1912. Try praying the words of this prayer every day this week and see what happens.