

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE**COVID Exposures**

PERSONAL LIBERTIES & RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE

OVERVIEW

This COVID-era, along with all the other tensions pressing in on us, has exposed various issues we constantly face. To be sure, COVID didn't cause these issues any more than a truck driving over a bridge causes a crack to finally give way. As followers of Jesus, we need to be attentive to the world around us and the temptations inside of us that we might apply the truth of the gospel to all parts of our lives as we seek to find complete joy in Jesus.

APPLY // PERSONAL LIBERTIES

Main Idea: We need to have increased confidence that what God's word says is for our good and less confidence that the world's commands set us free.

1. Read John 8:31-38.
 - a. In verses 31-32, Jesus says that abiding in his word is the way we know the truth. Why do we need to abide in God's word to know truth? What does it look like for us to abide in the word/truth? Go deeper than "reading the Bible." Think about how our corporate gatherings, community groups, and discipling relationships help us abide in the truth.
 - b. Jesus connects knowing the truth to being free. What does Jesus mean when he says "you will be set free"? Why is it necessary to know the truth to be free? How does the truth set us free? What does this look like in our lives together as a church?
 - c. In verse 34, Jesus notes that everyone who makes a practice of sinning is a slave to sin. What does Jesus mean by this? Why does sin actually bring slavery? How does this differ with what we might hear outside the church, and even what our own feelings tell us at times? How can we humbly remind each other that giving into sin is slavery? How can we humbly help those outside the church see that giving into sin brings slavery?
 - d. How does the gospel—the truth of Jesus' perfect life, sin-paying death, victorious resurrection—set us free?
 - e. Discuss how this passage shows what Jesus wants *for us* not just from us. Why is it important to be motivated by what Jesus wants *for us*?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-7.
 - a. What are some things you notice about love in this passage? How it is described? Compare and contrast 1 Corinthians 13 (cf. 1 John 4:9-10) with the ways love is talked about in our culture.
 - b. Focusing on verse 6, why is it not loving to rejoice, affirm, or approve of wrongdoing? How does this connect back to Jesus' words about the practice of sin leading to slavery?
 - c. Why is it loving to rejoice, affirm, and approve what is the truth?
 - d. In seeking to apply verse 6 to our context, what temptations confront us?
 - i. What's the danger in having firm convictions but no kindness?

- ii. What's the danger in having kindness but no firm convictions?
- iii. How can we as a church live out verse 6 with a convictional kindness?

OBSERVE & INTERPRET // RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE

Main Idea: Restorative church discipline is a loving process of encouraging a fellow brother or sister caught in sin to repent that they might enjoy the freedom and fellowship of the gospel.

1. Read Matthew 18:15-20.
2. Notice in verse 15, Jesus says, "If your brothers sins against you." What audience is Jesus addressing? Why is this important as we seek to correctly interpret these verses?
3. Explain the "process" Jesus describes in verses 15-16?
4. In verse 17, Jesus says, "tell it to the church." What does this mean? Who is the church? How do we know who the church is? What does it mean to "tell it"?
5. If the unrepentant person who claims to be a Christian refuses to repent, what does Jesus say to do? What does it mean to treat this person as a Gentile or tax collector?
6. Why does Jesus provide these instructions for his church?
7. How does this process model the love and character of the Lord? How does the gospel motivate and inform this restorative discipline process?

ACCOUNTABILITY

Relationships developed and deepened during accountability provide regular encouragement, and when necessary admonition, to spur each other on to delight in the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Ask one another heart-probing, clarifying questions, and help each other apply the gospel to your lives.

QUESTION: Catch up from the past 6 weeks and pray for each other.