

Growth Groups Lesson
January 8-9
2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Big Idea: Jesus has reconciled us to the Father and has given us His mission of reconciling the world to Himself, so be reconciled to God and share the good news so that others might be reconciled too!

Spend some time praying with your group and ask for help in seeing and applying His Word.

Paul's goal in writing the letter of 2 Corinthians is an appeal to the Corinthian church to repent and to accept his apostolic ministry as legitimate because he is sharing the true Gospel. Paul continuously connects his apostolic ministry with his own sufferings as a means to show Christ's power, through the Holy Spirit. Paul, because of his many sufferings, is able to bring comfort and make Christ known in the world in the power of the Holy Spirit. If they cannot accept Paul's message, they cannot accept the true Gospel of Jesus, because they are one in the same.

Read 5:11-15

These verses speak of Paul and company's mission to share the Gospel, doing so plainly and without deceit or secretive methods. It may seem to some that they are out of their minds because of the hardships they endure to spread the Gospel.

1. What compels Paul and friends to endure hardship to spread the Gospel? **Verses 14-15**

Jesus lived and died for others rather than Himself. Paul's call to us in verse 15 is, "that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again." There are three areas that we often try to cling tightly to that Jesus calls us to give over to Him: our stuff, our lives, and our loved ones. **Read Luke 18:18-30**

2. Which of these three areas (my stuff, my life, my loved ones) is hardest for you to trust God with?
3. Are any of these things truly your own to control? Who owns them?
4. If you were to follow Paul's call in verse 15, how would that change how you interact with these three areas in your life now?

Read 5:16-21

Because Jesus has reconciled us to the Father, anyone who is in Christ is a new creation.

5. What does it mean to be a new creation? **Read Romans 6, Col. 1:15-23, 3:1-17**
6. Describe your "old self" (pre-Jesus life) in 3 words. Describe your "new self" (in Christ) in 3 words.
7. Are these two "selves" different or the same? If different, what was the source of change?
8. What are some common themes between everyone's self descriptions?
9. What is the significance of your new life in Christ? How does it change how you live every day?

Now that we have been reconciled to God through Jesus, we have also been given the ministry of reconciliation. We are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus in carrying out His own ministry of reconciliation. As an ambassador of Christ, we have a great responsibility to share the Gospel.

10. If we are to live our lives for the one who died for us, how does that change how we approach sharing the Gospel?
11. Do you want others to experience the same new life in Christ that you've experienced?
12. What will compel you to take part in this mission? Verses 14-15
13. Is there anything in your life that is getting in the way of sharing the Gospel with others (physically, emotionally, spiritually)?
14. Do you feel equipped to share the Gospel with others?

For a starting point in sharing your faith, you can watch a past sermon featuring John Rozelle of Cru: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3wcumBMUdM> or click the video under the Resources tab of the Church Center App

We have the promise that the Holy Spirit will be with us before, during, and after we share the Gospel with others. We don't have to be afraid of not finding people to share with, not knowing what to say, or rejection because He is with us! **Read John 14:15-27, Ephesians 2:8-10**

As a Growth Group, you have an amazing opportunity to reach out to your neighborhoods and communities to reconcile them to the Father through Jesus. The transformation of your community is something that God deeply desires, and He has placed you here for that very purpose!

15. What are some specific ways that your group could serve your neighbors?
16. What are some specific ways that your group could share the Gospel with your neighbors?
17. When do you plan on doing that?

Don Warren: "If you want to change the world, go tell your neighbor about Jesus."

18. Who will you share the Good News with this week?
19. How can this group support you in doing that?