

2022 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

May 22 - Community Guide

This week concludes our series on Five Good Fights: Choose Your (Relational) Battles Wisely. We have focused on the need to fight for Forgiveness, Compassion, Gratitude, Humility and now Expectations. Relationships can be challenging, but they can also provide some of the most meaningful times of our lives. Healthy relationships are worth fighting for!

Community Prayer:

Lord, we want to have healthy, lifegiving relationships and we know that you want that for us. Help us to learn and grow together as we discover the fights that are worth fighting so that our relationships can be strong and healthy. May our relationships with one another help point people to you. In Jesus' name, Amen

Opening Questions:

1. How have your relationships been this past week? At work, home, socially?
2. Share about something challenging that happened in one of your relationships and how you handled it.
3. Share about something meaningful that happened in one of your relationships and how you handled it.

Exploration:

Last week Aaron gave us great insight from James chapter 3 about how humility can help shape healthy relationships. If we don't have humility, our desires can take over and cause harm to others and we may miss looking at ourselves and the responsibility we have. The statement he used last week was, *"It's not 'you'...It's 'me'."* But this week the statement is, *"It is 'me' ... it is 'you'... and wow... this is so complicated!"*

This week we have both an Old Testament and a New Testament example of how a God-focused perspective on our relationships can impact the way we interact with people in a healthy way, even when our expectations are not met. Have someone in the group read the following scriptures aloud:

Joshua 14:6-12

Caleb was one of the original 12 men sent into the Promised Land to help God's people find a way to take possession of the land that God had promised to them. All 12 of them saw that the land was filled with the good things that God had promised, but it was also filled with barriers that made taking the land seem impossible.



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Out of the 12 who went into the land, only Caleb and Joshua believed that God would do what he promised and because of the fear of the 10, the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness for more than 40 years. But even after all those years of unnecessary wandering, Caleb still had his focus on God, and he believed that God would do what he promised.

4. If you were Caleb, how do you think you would feel living alongside people who you disagreed with for over 40 years?

Numbers 14:24

When we keep our primary focus on God, it changes how we view our relationships, and it allows us to live radically differently from those who try to navigate relationships on their own.

5. How does your relationship with God help you approach difficult relationships with the people in your life?

Our New Testament example of handling expectations in relationships is the story of Paul and Barnabas.

Acts 9:26-27

Saul (who would eventually be called, Paul) had been a well-known persecutor of Christians. People were afraid of him, and rightly so! But Jesus got a hold of him on the road to Damascus and radically transformed his life. Barnabas was the first person to stand up for Paul and to trust that God had truly transformed his life. This created a deep bond of friendship between Barnabas and Paul.

Acts 15:36-41

All throughout the book of Acts we see that Paul and Barnabas shared in powerful ministry together. But here we see that there was a disagreement between Paul and Barnabas that was so severe that they parted ways and no longer did ministry together.

The bible doesn't tell us who was right and who was wrong in the story of Paul and Barnabas, and it is not really the point. What we know is that Paul continued to offer grace and peace to all believers, even after this experience. He did not let this relational break down keep him from moving forward with all that God had for him to do.



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We can probably all relate to experiencing disappointments and unmet expectations in relationships. It can be difficult and painful to process these kinds of situations.

6. Share about a difficult relationship that you have personally experienced and how you handled the situation. There is no need to share names, but rather focus more on how you processed the difficulty.

“Sometimes to get your life back, you have to face the death of what you thought your life would look like.” -Lysa TerKeust

The loss or “death” of a dream for a relationship can feel a lot like a physical death. There are several common stages many people experience with grief and loss:

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

There is an additional step that we as Christ followers are able to experience as we process through our difficult relational losses:

- Find meaning with God

7. As you think about the relationship you mentioned earlier, what stage do you currently find yourself experiencing?
8. How could this group help you as you move forward in processing this relationship?

Romans 12:17-18

9. What stands out to you from this passage?

“It is our choice whether we stay stuck in our hurt or get renewed in our hearts.” – Lysa TerKeurst

Ephesians 3:20-21 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.



