

LIFE GROUP GUIDE - Week Starting Sunday 3rd March

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

This Week's BIG IDEA

We've now crossed over into the second section of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Section one was broadly about divisions and the cross, from 1 Corinthians 1:10 to 4:21. Section two, from 1 Corinthians 5:1 to 7:40, could be summarised the phrase 'flee sexual immorality' although, as we'll see, there are other threads and themes that seep through.

Preaching relatively slowly through this letter rather than jumping to the juicy or controversial verses is so helpful, not least because we've seen how thoroughly Paul has reminded the church of the Gospel! For four long chapters, he's kept bringing them back to the cross, to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We may have thought this repetition was getting a bit tedious; however, understanding this is vital! Our approach to any and every ethical issue, not just sexual ones (see verse 11 for example), whether in our own life or the lives of our brothers and sisters, is an application of the Gospel, rather than a standalone moral issue.

Focussing on God

Is there someone in your Life Group who has a good voice or can play an instrument (even to an intermediate standard)? Why not ask them to kick start a short time of worship by bringing one song? Then encourage others to follow up with a declaration, verse, prayer or song, as the Spirit leads.

It's interesting that at Jesus' last 'Life Group' with his disciples, in Matthew 26:30, we're told they sang one song! Perhaps the most musical of the dozen of them helped pitch a note or get started. I don't think any of them had a guitar!

Getting into Scripture

1. Please read 1 Corinthians 5:1-8

- What issues (plural) is Paul aiming to address in this section of his letter?
- Why do you think he didn't mention this as part of the report he'd heard from someone in Chloe's household back in 1 Corinthians 1:11? What can we learn from Paul's approach?
- How is 'handing someone over to Satan' (see verse 5) another way of expressing the same idea of 'putting someone out of fellowship' (see verse 2)?
- What does verse 5 tell us about the purpose or aim of phase 4 of church discipline (see Matthew 18:17b), and how should this impact our tone?
- How can we each contribute to a church culture of 'sincerity and truth' (in verse 5)?

2. Please read 1 Corinthians 5:9-13

- What distinction is Paul making here between how we engage with people inside and outside the church?
- How does this instruction help us when thinking about ethical issues and legislation in our nation?
- Have you had experience of giving or receiving admonishment from a fellow Christian? How did this feel? What did you learn from it? What would you differently next time?

Time to Pray

Pray for yourselves as a Life Group, particularly that you'd grow in *all* the 'one anothering' instructions mentioned in the New Testament.