

The Road Home

Week 2 | Not a Building but a Family

BOTTOM LINE

Jesus didn't define the church as a building but as a movement.

GOAL OF THE GROUP

For this series, we know that many people do not have a problem with God as much as they do organized religion. Many people view the relationship with God being "religious." We hope this week we help people shift their view on church being a building but a movement of people who experience the power of community.

SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 12:12-31 – Paul wrote to the Corinth people to encourage and correct their views about themselves, God, culture and even the purpose of the gathering of people together as a church community.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Share:** When you hear the word "church" what are some of the images or thoughts that come to mind?
 - If you have a great view of the church now (hopefully), how did that shift if you experience before was negative?
 - Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 and Discuss:**
 - How does Paul use the metaphor that the body is made of many parts just like the church is?
 - What are some of the benefits of having many people who have different skills, talents, and experiences part of the community?
 - How has the "many parts of the community" been a benefit in your life? How has this concept allowed you to benefit and encourage others? (In the past we have even said "your pain can become a platform", how does that impact the people in the movement of the church?)
 - If we are "designed to work in harmony, depend on one another, and help each other," how would that impact the way we live our lives?
 - How would the church as a movement that celebrated each other's differences impact those who are watching the church and wondering what "following Jesus" has for them? How could the church operating as one body change people's perception of the church, its people and Jesus?
 - Reflect on this quote from the Washington Post on loneliness - *Loneliness in "epidemic proportions" is producing a "loneliness literature" of sociological and medical findings about the effect of loneliness on individuals' brains and bodies, and on communities. Sasse (R-Neb.) says "there is a growing consensus" that loneliness — not obesity, cancer or heart disease — is the nation's "number one health crisis." "Persistent loneliness" reduces average longevity more than twice as much as does heavy drinking and more than three times as much as obesity, which often is a consequence of loneliness. Research demonstrates that loneliness is as physically dangerous as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and contributes to cognitive decline, including more rapid advance of Alzheimer's disease. Sasse says, "We're literally dying of despair," of the failure "to fill the hole millions of Americans feel in their lives."*
 - What if the church was DESIGNED to be the answer as a movement of people?
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"In essential beliefs we have **unity**, in non-essential beliefs we have liberty, and in all beliefs we have **charity.**" – John Wesley



TRY THIS

- Celebrate one person's gift that you have benefited from within the Church.**
- Choose one act of using your gift for another person in the Church.**

The Road Home

Week 1 | Rejecting Religion

■ BOTTOM LINE

Jesus didn't come to start a RELIGION OF RULES but to establish a RELATIONSHIP OF LOVE.

■ GOAL OF THE GROUP

For this series, we know that many people do not have a problem with God as much as they do organized religion. Many people view the relationship with God being "religious." We hope that we move away from the "doing" of religious activities for activities sake but learn what it means to pursue a relationship and how that could change of our view of God, faith, and relationships with others! And maybe, others would take notice!

■ SCRIPTURE

Romans 3:20, Galatians 3:19, 21-27, Romans 5:10, Ephesians 2:8-9

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Share:** When did you do something out of obligation and how did it feel? Did you parents make you get dressed up for a party? Did you have a family tradition that you reluctantly participated in?
2. Is there a defining moment in your life where you faced difficult or heartbreak times and asked the question "why"? If so, how did that situation shape you and your relationship with God?
3. **Read & Discuss:** The writer, the Apostle Paul, built his life on following rules. He kept the rules, enforced the rules and used the rules to keep other people "in line." Once he had started a relationship with Jesus he understood that Jesus didn't come to start a RELIGION of RULES but to establish a RELATIONSHIP of LOVE! And because of that he lets everyone else know! Read all 3 of these scriptures: Romans 3:20. Galatians 3:19, 21-27 and Romans 5:10 and discuss:
 - a. What do you notice about the themes around the LAW (or rules) vs. RELATIONSHIP (grace)?
 - b. Why do you think Paul was pointing to the freedom found in Jesus instead of rules?
 - i. How can you relate to this? Has there ever been a time when you found rules to be suffocating?
 - c. Why do you think Jesus wants a relationship with more than rules?
 - d. How would a relationship with Jesus lead to more freedom in our life and more peace in our hearts?
4. Discuss this statement: **The moment Jesus died on the cross the focus went from CONDITIONAL RULES to an UNCONDITIONAL FRIENDSHIP**
 - a. Read Ephesians 2:8-9 - *For it is by **grace** you have been saved, through **faith**—and this is **not from yourselves**, it is the gift of God— **9 not by works**, so that no one can boast.*
 - b. How is this message of good news healthy for us to leave out? How does this change our relationship with God?

The moment Jesus died on the cross the focus went from **CONDITIONAL RULES** to an **UNCONDITIONAL FRIENDSHIP**



TRY THIS

1. **Pray for each other this week. Write down the prayer requests and put them in a bowl and have everyone pray for one other person in the group.**
2. **Choose 1 step to take towards Trusting God in the midst of a difficult situation today!**