

Membership Covenant

The 5 G's
Groups
Giving
Gifts
Grace
Growth

A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Text for the Week: 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Message for the Week: Compelling Love

Sunday, April 28

Opening:

What is one low (a bad thing) and one high (a good thing) that happened to you this past week?
Write them down and take turns sharing them with the others in your group.

Where have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life this past week?

Who is the craziest person you know? What makes them crazy?

Preparation:

Spend 1-2 minutes in silence with God to center and prepare yourself for your time with God today.

Read:

Read / Have two people in your group read [2 Corinthians 5:11-21](#) out loud.

[Clicking the link will bring you to multiple translations.]

As you read and/or listen to the text being read, circle, highlight, or underline what words, phrases, or ideas grabbed your attention and heart in these verses?

Write them down below and/or share them with those who are with you.

Respond / Reflect:

What does it mean to regard someone from a worldly point of view?

What does it mean to take pride in what is seen? What does it mean to take pride in what is in the heart?

Why does God make his appeal through people like us?

What effect did the “love of Christ” have on Paul? In what ways was Paul changed by the love of Christ? What effect does the “love of Christ” have on you? How are you changed by the love of Christ?

What does your heart treasure? How are you being compelled by these treasures?

What is the ministry of reconciliation that Jesus gives us?

Try It:

Do something you/the world would see as crazy or ridiculous this week because the love of Jesus compels you. This may cause you to have to do some digging in your heart.

Prayer:

Spend time in prayer with/for the other people who are with you. Pray this prayer together:

Father, my heart is distracted, and it compels me to go in directions away from you. As King David prayed, “create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me,” give me a heart that is so captivated by the grace and mercy of Christ that I can’t help but share it wherever I am. AMEN

Missional/Spiritual Practice: Growth

I commit to deepen my faith in Jesus Christ through regular Scripture reading and prayer.

I commit to having and pursuing a personal rule of life (a plan for intentionally growing my relationship with Jesus Christ) and living it out in my community, my church, and His Kingdom.

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

New International Version

5 ¹¹ Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. ¹² We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. ¹³ If we are “out of our mind,” as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴ For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:^[a] The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin^[b] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- a. 2 Corinthians 5:17 Or *Christ, that person is a new creation.*
- b. 2 Corinthians 5:21 Or *be a sin offering*

The Message

5 ¹¹⁻¹⁴ *That* keeps us vigilant, you can be sure. It’s no light thing to know that we’ll all one day stand in that place of Judgment. That’s why we work urgently with everyone we meet to get them ready to face God. God alone knows how well we do this, but I hope you realize how much and deeply we care. We’re not saying this to make ourselves look good to you. We just thought it would make you feel good, proud even, that we’re on your side and not just nice to your face as so many people are. If I acted crazy, I did it for God; if I acted overly serious, I did it for you. Christ’s love has moved me to such extremes. His love has the first and last word in everything we do.

A New Life

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ Our firm decision is to work from this focused center: One man died for everyone. That puts everyone in the same boat. He included everyone in his death so that everyone could also be included in his life, a resurrection life, a far better life than people ever lived on their own.

¹⁶⁻²⁰ Because of this decision we don’t evaluate people by what they have or how they look. We looked at the Messiah that way once and got it all wrong, as you know. We certainly don’t look at him that way anymore. Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone; a new life emerges! Look at it! All this comes from the God who settled the relationship between us and him, and then called us to settle our relationships with each other. God put the world square with himself through the Messiah, giving the world a fresh start by offering forgiveness of sins. God has given us the task of telling everyone what he is doing. We’re Christ’s representatives. God uses us to persuade men and women to drop their differences and enter into God’s work of making things right between them. We’re speaking for Christ himself now: Become friends with God; he’s already a friend with you.

²¹ How? you ask. In Christ. God put the wrong on him who never did anything wrong, so we could be put right with God.