

Instructions:

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.

Series: There's Got to be a Better Way??!

It is no secret we live in polarizing and divisive times. Our world labels, judges, cancels, and dismisses others, all in the name of being on the "right" side. And all too often, Christians play right along, acting no better than anyone else. Even worse, the Christian faith has been used, reduced, and manipulated to justify hateful behaviors and particular worldviews. As we live through another election cycle, people of faith must ask; is this really how Jesus called us to live? Is this really what Jesus wanted for the church? What is at stake if American Christians continue in this way? Is a third way of living and loving even possible?

Message Description:

Paul addressed the diverse and divided church in Corinth, one representing many gifts, ethnicities, ages, and genders, and offered them a rule, guide, or ethic for how their community ought to live and worship together. At the end of 1 Corinthians 12 he says, "But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way." And what is that more excellent way? One he defines in the very next chapter, a way of love.

Loving people means engagement. That means, if it makes you feel uncomfortable, you can't just leave, even though that is our impulse with anything we don't understand or anything that is other. Difference in general makes us uncomfortable and anxious. Which is why it is the church's call right now to embody a different way to be, and to love one another by engaging with one another. We can let the cross of Jesus Christ and his unconditional love guide us in how we vote, how we post on social media, and how we engage in conversation with brothers and sisters within the body of Christ. In all that we do, our posture, tone, and approach must reflect that of our King, Jesus.

Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:27-31 and 1 Corinthians 13

Questions based on this week's teaching:

1. Read 1 Corinthians 13 out loud in your group. Reflect on it. What does love look like and sound like in our culture and context right now?
2. In her teaching, Rachel said, "Love is engaging and deciding to take a step toward each other." This is the power of the incarnation of Christ, in the very places where everybody else walked out, Jesus walked in. Where do you sense the spirit of Christ calling you to "step in" where others are stepping out or banishing others?
3. In his book, "Not In It To Win It, Andy Stanley encourages believers to not withdraw from the political process but to lean in and be engaged "because we have been called to love and to care for others. [Therefore], we have to do everything we can to create and protect the culture of human flourishing, which is fueled by the love and care of God as we love and care in his name." Do you believe we can use our vote and voice in this way? Why or why not?
4. In her teaching, Rachel outlined how we can let love guide us in how we vote, post, and engage with one another. Which one challenges you the most right now? Where or when do you have a hard time being loving?