

DISTURBING THE P E A C E REJECTION

LEADER NOTES & KEY SCRIPTURES

LEADER TIPS: There isn't time to cover every question – **choose what's best for your group.**

The topic of rejection is incredibly sensitive. Please pray beforehand and throughout your group for the Holy Spirit's grace to help people share with transparency and to respond to one another with tenderness.

If this is the last week that your group will meet, please take time (perhaps during snacks or even as an ice breaker) to ask folks to **share the ways they have benefitted from group life** this fall!

Invite your group participants to complete the **brief feedback survey** that you will send to them via email.

They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have." 6 But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord. 7 And the Lord told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. 8 As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. 9 Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will claim as his rights."

1 Samuel 8:5-9

Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.

Romans 15:7 (NLT)

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

Romans 5:8 (NLT)

TALK IT OVER

Because of what Christ has done for us, the default disposition of the Christian's heart is peace. The goal for this series is to evict the mindsets that are disturbing that peace. The occupants of your mind, such as fear, stress, worry and rejection, have no legal right to stay, but must be forced out. Let's partner with the Holy Spirit to see that happen in our lives!

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- When you were growing up, who was the kid in school who everyone picked on? Why? Did you join in? How do you feel about that now?
- Briefly tell about a time when you have felt rejected.

Start thinking. Ask questions to get your group thinking.

- What are some symptoms of rejection that you have noticed in the lives of others? In your own life?
- What are some ways that living with (accepting) feelings of rejection could be costly in someone's life?
(E.g. One expends incalculable energy, time, effort to please the one who rejected them, often to no avail; a rejected person can end up rejecting others; etc.)
- On Sunday, Pastor Brandon said that when rejection is ruling over our lives, we become "slaves." In what ways might that happen?
(E.g. We may become transfixed with pleasing the one who rejected us – and pleasing him/her may never happen; we can become enslaved to pleasing anyone and everyone around us, even to our own detriment; Fear of further rejection prevents us from saying what we truly think/feel and thereby remain trapped in bad situations; etc.)

Start sharing. Choose from these questions to create openness.

- Distribute and take time as a group to talk through the "Understanding Rejection Chart" included in this week's material. Focus particularly on the three defensive postures as well as the resulting attitudes/reactions towards God. Invite participants to circle responses, emotions, and attitudes in the chart that they recognize in themselves as you discuss it.
- Most of us know what it feels like to be criticized and rejected at times, even by the very people in our lives we desperately want to please. If you're willing, briefly tell us about someone whom you felt (or feel) rejected by. How have you responded to that feeling of rejection? How has it influenced your attitude toward God?
(Might want to refer back to the "Understanding Rejection" Chart.)
- What does it mean to hear that God loves you and will never reject you? Do you believe this? Why or why not?

(If some in your group have trouble believing this, share the following:)

Have someone read Romans 5:8 aloud. God loves us because he chooses to love us in spite of our failures. He loved us while we were still sinners, and he will never stop loving us. *(Continued, next page)*

DISTURBING THE P E A C E REJECTION

TALK IT OVER

LEADER TIP: Stress confidentiality regarding anything that is shared in group!

It is the same today, for a few of the people of Israel have remained faithful because of God's grace—his undeserved kindness in choosing them. 6 And since it is through God's kindness, then it is not by their good works. For in that case, God's grace would not be what it really is—free and undeserved.

Romans 11 :5-6 (NLT)

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

Deuteronomy 31:8 (NIV)

Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28 :20 (NLT)

When you forgive this man, I forgive him, too. And when I forgive whatever needs to be forgiven, I do so with Christ's authority for your benefit, 11 so that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are familiar with his evil schemes.

2 Corinthians 2 :10-11 (NLT)

LEADER TIP: After the meeting topic is covered, you should be ready to discuss what is next for your group (having already spoken with individuals/couples privately.) Be certain to communicate with Pastor Dwayne about your plans as a leader and your group plans!

We have one "bonus" week in the Disturbing the Peace series. Since many groups will not meet during Thanksgiving week, you will receive via email a powerful Bible Study to distribute to your group members to read on their own.

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Two parables that Jesus taught come to mind: The **first** was about a son who demanded all his future inheritance in advance and left his father. After living a hard life, he realized the error of his decision and returned home to find his loving father eagerly running out to embrace him. (Luke 15:11) **Second**, the parable Jesus told about the man who discovered a treasure in a field and went and sold everything he had so he could buy the treasure. (Matt 13:44) **We are that treasure to God. He gave everything to purchase us and redeem us. And, even though we often refuse, reject and run away from God, he is always eager to accept us when we repent and return back to him.**

When we feel alone, abandoned or overwhelmed, we can take heart that our relationship with God is not based on our performance but simply upon our faith in Jesus. He chooses to love us and use us even when we don't deserve it. If it were anything else, it wouldn't be grace. (Romans 11:6) We can take great comfort in knowing He will never leave us or forsake us. (Deut. 31:8) And He will always be with us. (Matt. 28:20).

Start responding. Encourage everyone to be bold and pray with power.

- Read 2 Corinthians 2:10-11 aloud. Paul referred to a man who had done him and his ministry great personal harm. To refuse to forgive others is to walk right into one of Satan's schemes intended to destroy us. How does the trap of unforgiveness harm us? What effect does it have on the one who wounded us? (*e.g no effect*)
- Forgiveness is the first step to being released from the feeling of rejection. Because we have been forgiven and loved unconditionally by God, we may now forgive others – even those who knowingly and purposefully rejected us.

Whom is the Holy Spirit showing you that you need to forgive for rejecting you?

- At times, we may "borrow an offense" from someone close to us (a spouse, child, friend) and feel as strongly as though we were the one who was hurt. Have you considered the ways that holding onto unforgiveness in such cases greatly hampers your ability to love and comfort the one close to you? How might your borrowed offense be making their forgiving others even more difficult?

Start doing/serving. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- If you prayed to forgive someone, write down the date and time of that prayer. Post it in a few places that you will see throughout the week so that you will not be tempted to pick up that wound again.
- Take some time to consider whether or not you have been unknowingly rejecting others around you and consider what you could change this week to show them unconditional love.
- What is one way that you can become more accepting of others?