



GROWING – My Acceptance of Others 03 May 2020 Brian Greenaway

This Study Guide provides a summarised study with additional discussion questions based on the scriptures mentioned in the sermon.

Connect:

“God has brought together a diverse group of people in the Kingdom of God. In Ephesians He reminds all of the believers that they are all equal before God. The Gospel deals with the horizontal as well as the vertical relationships.

As we grow in maturity we need to learn to ‘one-another’ each other.

The building is not the building; we are the building, the temple of the Holy Spirit.”

Brian Greenaway

Engage:

Large Californian church, 1970’s. full of people in their Sunday best. Suits and ties, dressed up to the nines. Had worship etc, preacher is preaching. Door opens and in walks a young man. He makes his way down the long aisle past hundreds of puzzled people. Appearance, his hair is long, his face is tanned from so much time outside and sleeping rough, he wears a faded t-shirt and torn jeans (when you didn’t pay £150 to have someone tear them for you) and he has no shoes. He has an old guitar slung over his back, and a duffle bag with all his belongings in one hand. He walks to the front of the aisle right in front of the preacher, and sits down cross-legged right under the pulpit. Apart from the preacher, it is quiet as all eyes are on him. What is everyone thinking? Then, in the far-left corner in the front row an elderly man stands up. He is one of the church leaders, he has been in church all his life. Highly respected and godly. He walks slowly across to the young man, until he is by his side. Then he sits, cross legged, right down next to him. The young man turns and this godly man smiles and puts his hand on his shoulder. And there they stay for the rest of the service.

A TRUE STORY

1. What would be your reaction to this?
2. Where and who are you in this story?
3. Would you ridicule him for not following the rules or praise him for eagerly wanting to learn the word of God?
4. When you were reading this story, what were your assumptions of the man? If negative, this must galvanise you to open your heart to all of God’s people.

Framework:

1. Read and discuss Ephesians 2: 11-13
2. How accepting am I of others?
3. How does God enable you to be accepting of others?
4. What makes you not accept others?
5. Do you think culture or tradition makes you more accepting or less accepting of others?

“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.”

Ephesians 2:14-18

6. What does this scripture mean to you?
 - At the time this was written, the temple had an inner and outer area - these were to demarcate those of who were Jews and non-Jews. But with the crucifixion of Christ, the division was torn and we were made equal.
7. How do you think the non-Jews would have felt with the separation?
8. Do you think this would have affected their faith?
 - Through the cross God has made them into one body putting to death enmity. One body is a strong term and does not refer to one being friends, it is a much deeper relationship!

“The primary activity of the church was one-anothering one another.”

Andy Stanley

- There are 50+ statements in the New Testament that include the phrase one another. In English its 2 words – in Greek its one word. It’s used about 100 times in the New Testament; about 50 are instructions to Jesus followers.
- One third are about unity (of the 50), One third relate to Christians loving one another, 15-20% about humility – putting others before yourself.

‘The word represents the significant fact that Christians must not live in isolation but are called to interact with one another. To not interact with fellow believers is to live in defiance of the clear teaching of scripture.’

Bill Mounce

9. How are you accepting of others who are different?
10. The building is the place where we can gather but how we can become more of a community/unit?

“Making disciples is not about making people like us.”

Brian Greenaway

11. How do you engage with people who want to know about your faith?
 - This is an important thought, because sometimes words and actions can make us seem as if because we know Christ, we are better than someone who does not.
 - Maybe our cultural practices (like of the Jewish people in Apostle Paul’s time, makes us feel that we are more worthy because of all we do (or think we do). However, it should not be like this; Jesus sat with and spoke with everyone irrespective of their background or culture. His actions spoke of acceptance of every person, that approached Him.
12. Are you asking God to help guide and grow you during this lockdown?
13. Read and discuss 1 Peter 2: 4-10
14. Is there a presence of God amongst us?
15. How do people who want to know more about Jesus engage with you?
16. Are you like the believing Jewish community – unable to relate to people with no faith background?
17. Read and discuss Ephesians 2:20-22
18. Read and discuss Ephesians 2:14-18

Prayer:

Lord, thank you that you accept me for who I am. Please help me to love and accept all others. In Jesus Name Amen