



## A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of July 23, 2017

WEPC small groups meet in homes across Richmond every week to participate in Jesus Christ's mission to Richmond, enjoy fellowship, study God's Word, pray together, and explore the fruit of the Gospel on our lives. Simply put, these groups are small enough to be the church to one another, and they serve as bridges between WEPC and the community where God has planted us. It is a place where the church can go deeper in the worship of God and further in Christ's mission.

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a "worship discussion" guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

## Sermon: "In The Sight of God"

*This week, Steve Shelby preached on [II Corinthians 12:11-21](#).*

- Paul here concludes his defense not just of his ministry as an Apostle, but what the longing of his heart is for the Church in Corinth. Just as he has done in all the churches he planted, Jesus performed miracles in Corinth. Even with that Paul still refused to be paid by the church. This refusal, strangely, is what has been used against him. He finishes this section by stating that he is afraid of what he will find in Corinth when he comes to visit: "Quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder" (20), along with "impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality" (21).
- He would have to be humbled before them as he mourned their sin. His rebuke and correction come not from righteous indignation but from sadness over their sin. Their sin was primarily against God and not Paul.
- The headline verse in this text is verse 14 and the illustration of parenthood that follows it (15): "Here for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours but you. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?"
- What does he mean here that he seeks "you", the Corinthians themselves, and not what they can do for him? He is interested not in what they can do for him, but in a loving and faithful relationship, based on the love of Christ for them, without reference to what they can do or give to him.
- Is there anyone in your life where you can honestly say, I seek in this relationship not what you can give to me, but simply to know and love you? When was the last time someone served you and it made you nervous because you wondered what it might cost you? Are there any places where you freely and willingly give without expectation of reciprocation? Should there even be relationships like this? Are there "Corinthians" in your life that use you? Or, Are you a "Corinthian"?
- Paul hopes for reciprocation, but he does not demand it, even subtly. He certainly wants to see the Corinthians repent, but he is willing to be sad, not angry, if they do not. His power as an Apostle will be manifested not in railing against them but in mourning over their sin. In Christ Paul is free to see the sin of the Corinthians as hurting themselves more that they are hurting him.
- So, is there a difference between hope and expectation? I hope for reciprocation. When I do not get it, do I mourn first?
- "Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but, through you, I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope." If that is true, how does that impact my search for love from others? Am I willing to spend and be spent for the sake of others? Jesus spent it all.

## Going Deeper in God's Worship

Reflect on the text together. [Hear the sermon here.](#)

- 1.) What is true about God's character, promises or work?
- 2.) What does the Scripture teach you about yourself or others?
- 3.) Are you encouraged to follow Jesus in His mission? How?

Reflect on the whole of Sunday's liturgy together. Locate this week's [Order of Worship here.](#)

- 1.) Was there an element of the worship service that you would like to share with the group?
  - *A Scripture verse that was read?*
  - *A prayer that was prayed?*
  - *A song that was sung?*
  - *A sacrament that was administered?*
  - *A way that glory was given to God?*
  - *A way that someone encouraged you?*
- 2.) Did the Holy Spirit convict, change, or encourage you in any way you wish to share with the group?
- 3.) Is Jesus leading you or the group to take a specific risk to minister the Good News to Richmond? Your neighbors? Your co-workers? Your family and friends?

## Going Further in Christ's Mission

- 1.) Have the Scripture text open in front of you as a guide to your prayers.
  - Spend time thanking God and giving Him glory.
- 2.) Ask the Lord for vision, strength and faith as followers of Jesus Christ.
  - Count on the work of the Holy Spirit for change.
  - Ask for God's forgiveness and grace to repent of sin and trust Jesus.
  - Pray for the world, our country, Richmond, and the Church.
  - Pray for members of your group, family members, or co-workers, neighbors and friends.

*Questions about this week's study guide? Contact Kevin Greene, [kevin@wepc.org](mailto:kevin@wepc.org)  
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