



SERIES: A Long Obedience

Group Guide Week 3 (for the week of March 21st, 2021)

SERIES OVERVIEW:

Most of us experience life from failure to failure, mishap to mishap, or crisis to crisis. It's understandable. Life, particularly modern life, has its fair share of difficulties. It's hard to feel like we are headed any place positive. But, what if we could? What if we could experience life as a beautifully unified story that proves just how much God loves us? In this series, we will be discussing God's masterful plan known as discipleship. The ability to stay consistently disciplined in order to experience more of who God is and who he's made us to be.

Big Idea: God's design and delight are found in the unity of his people.

Scripture: Psalm 133:1-3, Ephesians 4:1-3, Hebrews 10:24-25.

WEEK 2 RECAP:

If you missed Sunday's message here is WEEK THREE RECAP:

It cannot be denied that community is essential. And, it's equally difficult as it is essential. Our own history shows us sustained unity among a group of people often feels unattainable. But, when we understand God's original design of diversity, a unified community becomes desirable and obtainable. We have been built to live and thrive together. In order to do that, we must answer the biblical challenge of Psalm 133. We must get along.

Common misconceptions about unity:

- Unity means we will always agree
- Unity means we all look the same

How we attempt to all look the same:

- Policing (telling people what to do, how to do it, and why their ways are wrong")
- Peacekeeping (allowing things to happen that go against boundaries just to keep the peace)

GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. What are some ways we respond to people who look, talk and act differently than us?
2. Austin made the statement that *Community is an essential part of God's plan, but not just the people who are "like" us.*
 - a. How do you define community?
 - b. How do you feel about hanging out with people who have a different religion, different habits or addictions, or believe differently than you?
 - c. What are some ways we can pursue communities that are different from us in order for both parties to grow together in unity?
3. What are some ways that you have initially reacted to the different opinions around you? (facebook, twitter, text..etc)
4. Please read Psalm 133:1-3. This scripture is referring to the difference between HOW someone worships and how they are in relationship with God. It is not saying "this way is better than that way" but that God is pleased when Unity is formed.
 - a. What are some ways you were taught that one way of following Jesus is better than the other?
 - b. What are some ways, even today, that challenge you to want to change others opinions?
5. **Unity** is being together or at one with someone or something. It's the opposite of being divided. This is a word for togetherness or oneness.
 - a. Do you believe that we can be together, or at One, for God's purpose even if we have different views?
 - b. How can we work towards togetherness, even with those who think and act differently than we believe is "right"?
6. Austin answered question 5 by stating: "Our focus must shift from the difficulty of our journey to the fighting of division."
 - a. How can we value the different perspectives, talents and opinions of those around us?
 - b. How can we fight division with people who don't believe in the same things?
 - c. How can we choose to refrain from "policing" or "peacemaking" but leaning into Truth in Love?

TAKE AWAY & ACTION ITEMS:

- **Diversity is a part of God's design.**
- **Community is an essential part of God's plan.**
- **Community is essential to our understanding God well.**
- **Community is God's plan to continue our growth.**
- **Our focus must shift from the difficulty of our journey to the fighting of division.**

RESOURCES used on Sunday:

- True belonging is not passive. It's not the belonging that comes with just joining a group. It's not fitting in or pretending or selling out because it's safer. It's a practice that requires us to be vulnerable, get uncomfortable, and learn how to be present with people without sacrificing who we are. We want true belonging, but it takes tremendous courage to knowingly walk into hard moments.

Brene Brown (Braving the Wilderness)

- **1** How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! **2** It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe. **3** It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

Psalm 133:1-3(NIV)

- **24** And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, **25** not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another

Hebrews 10:24-25

- **1** As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. **2** Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **3** Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:1-3