

## Small Group Guide THE CROSS AND CHRISTIAN UNITY

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. Jim Shaddix

May 19, 2013

1 Corinthians 3:1-23

Use this resource as a tool to help Christ-followers move forward in their spiritual growth. To do this well requires that the Small Group Leader is building a relationship with the individuals in the small group and has identified where the people are in their relationship with God. Are they Christ-followers? Are they growing in Christ? If so, in what areas do they need to grow further? As disciple-makers, Small Group Leaders shepherd people to know the truth of Scripture, to understand why it matters, and to apply it to their lives. Small Group Leaders come alongside those whom they disciple to discover how loving God, loving each other, and loving those not yet in the Kingdom should shape how they live. The structure of this resource coincides with moving people from knowledge (Main Truth) to understanding (Why It Matters) to application (Now What Do We Do?). Utilize this Small Group Guide as a flexible teaching tool to inform your time together and not as a rigid task list.

### GETTING STARTED

*Welcome – Incorporate time for greeting one another, enjoying any refreshments, and making announcements. If guests are visiting, make introductions and help them feel welcomed. Ask for their contact information, so you can follow up with them.*

*Looking Back – Provide an opportunity for small group members to share what God is teaching them, how they are applying what they are learning, and how He has given them opportunities to share the gospel with others. This can be done as a whole group or in smaller groups. Do the people know each other well enough to share more than surface level information? How can time together be used to foster deeper relationships among those in the small group? Also, what are the struggles and needs of the people in the small group? How can the people in the small group sacrificially serve each other?*

*Looking Up – Hold prayer as fundamental to small group time rather than supplemental to it. Give adoration and thanksgiving to God in prayer. Submit yourself to Him, confessing sin. Petition God for personal needs and other requests. Pray for the disciple-making efforts of those in the group and for the salvation of the lost in each other's families, spheres of influence, and in the world. The Weekly Prayer Focus below can also be incorporated in the group's prayer time.*

#### *Weekly Prayer Focus (from Our Worship Guide)*

- *Pray for Our Lives: Ask God to reveal and jealousy or strife that might be causing disunity among our body so we can repent of it. Pray for God to unite us together as a local church while we strive with one another toward obedience. Ask God to unite our elders and other leaders and for them to promote unity among us. Pray we will all acknowledge the work of God in our church and attribute all glory to Him and not to anyone among us. Praise God for the gift of His Spirit who dwells within us. Pray for God to strengthen us to pursue his wisdom as opposed to the world's*
- *Pray for Our City: This week we are praying for the recruitment training and success of Brook Hills' summer Rock The Block outreach initiatives. These Backyard Bible Clubs will be held in suburban and urban homes and alongside some of our urban ministry partners at their facilities and camps. We are also praying for Ardent Church (glen Iris) and Steven Castello, Pastor.*
- *Pray for Our World: This week we are praying for Brooks Hills Church Planters to North Africa. This family is serving Long-Term in North Africa among the Arundo\*, an*

## Small Group Guide THE CROSS AND CHRISTIAN UNITY

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. Jim Shaddix

May 19, 2013

1 Corinthians 3:1-23

---

*unreached people group of over 10 million. Currently, our Church Planters are studying language and looking for ways to engage the Arundo community in different ways. Join us this week as we pray. For more information on the Arundo visit [brookhills.org/churchplanting](http://brookhills.org/churchplanting). \*Arundo is an adopted nickname for a people group whose identify must be kept secure. This week we are also praying for our Short-Term team serving in East Asia.*

### MAIN TRUTH

#### Message Outline

*The big deal with disunity over church leaders...*

The REASON: Carnal Christianity

- Christian maturity is stunted by carnality. (1-3)
- Christian carnality is rooted in vanity. (3-4)
- Christian vanity always causes disunity. (3-4)

The REMINDER: God is the star of the gospel

- The church is God's field. (5-9)
  - Leaders are the servants, but God gives the jobs.
  - Leaders work the ground, but God gives the growth.
  - Leaders work together because God gives the wages.
- The church is God's building. (9-15)
  - God gives the grace, so leaders build cooperatively.
  - God gives the gospel, so leaders build accordingly.
  - God gives the rewards, so leaders build for eternity.
- The church is God's temple. (16-17; cf. Eph. 2:21-22)
  - God gives His Spirit and each local church gets to host it.
  - God gives His holiness and each believer must preserve it.

The RESPONSE: Boast only in God

- The wisdom of the world is so deceptive. (18)
- The wisdom of God is so dominant. (19-20)
- The glory of God is so desirable. (21-23; cf. Eph. 1:20-23)

#### Message Summary

## Small Group Guide

# THE CROSS AND CHRISTIAN UNITY

*The Church at Brook Hills*

*Dr. Jim Shaddix*

*May 19, 2013*

*1 Corinthians 3:1-23*

---

This week we are continuing our study in 1 Corinthians, focusing on the Cross and Christian Unity. The believers in Corinth had begun to allow the issue of leadership in the church to cause division and disunity among the church. The reason for this was their carnal Christianity that was rooted in vanity and causing disunity. God, not gifted leaders, is the star of the gospel. The church is God's field, His building and His temple. The church has the unique responsibility of representing Christ on earth. We reject the deceptive wisdom of the world and boast only in God and His glory.

## **WHY IT MATTERS**

### *Digging Deeper*

As we are considering new elders in our faith family this week, spend some time briefly discussing the qualifications for elders in the church with your small group. Are they familiar with what the bible says about leaders within the church? Consider looking at passages like 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. What do these passages teach about the qualifications and character of elders? As we prayerfully consider the men God has raise up to possibly serve as elders in our faith family, encourage them to keep these qualifications in mind as we pray for these men and their families.

Help your small group to think about carnal Christianity. How would you define or explain it? In 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:3 Paul speaks about the two types of people who make up the world: natural people and spiritual people. Paul talks about this idea elsewhere in Romans 8:1-11. Take careful notice of Paul's use of the words "flesh" and "Spirit". Using these two texts as a guide what are the key differences between a natural person and a spiritual person? Consider having your group take a sheet of paper, make two columns, and list the difference between the two. What characterizes the belief of carnal Christians vs. Spirit-minded Christians? Can the people in your group identify people they know who are carnal Christians? How can they begin to pray and reach out to these brothers and sisters?

One reason for the disunity among the Corinthians believers is that their carnal Christianity had stunted their growth. How are the people in your small group progressing spiritually? What areas of their lives are they continuing to rely on the habits of the flesh? How can they begin to give these areas over to the Spirit? How can you and the rest of the members of your small group help each other grow? Consider separating into smaller groups of 3 or 4. Have each person identify an area that they would like to grow (evangelism, prayer, regular bible study, scripture memorization, service to other, etc.). Brainstorm together at least one practical steps can they take over the next week to deepen their relationship with the Lord in this area. Take a moment to pray that God would give us the grace necessary to grow in these areas.

Because of their spiritual immaturity, the Corinthian Christians were letting issues over leadership divide them. Leaders, no matter how dynamic are qualified are not the stars of the gospel, God is. God unifies all believers through the Gospel. How does the cross of Christ uniquely contribute to our understanding of Christian unity? All believers were once united in their separation from God in their sin, and have all believers are now unified in their salvation through the shed blood of Jesus. Read Ephesians 4:4-7. What do all believers have in common? How does the gospel break down boundaries and unify believers? How does the gospel message inform our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ? Are there people in your group who are letting trivial issues separate them from other believers? If so, what steps can they take to reconcile themselves with their fellow believers?

At the beginning of our study in 1 Corinthians, Pastor David mentioned one of the reasons we are studying this book as a faith family is that we want to care for every member of our faith family. One of the ways we can each contribute to unity and leadership in the church is through our relationships with other followers of Christ. How can our relationships with other brothers and sisters in Christ contribute to the unity, mission and growth of the church? The New Testament provides us a few examples of different types of relationships among believers. Consider the following relationships:

## Small Group Guide

### THE CROSS AND CHRISTIAN UNITY

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. Jim Shaddix

May 19, 2013

1 Corinthians 3:1-23

- **Do you have a Timothy?** The great commission is an imperative command to make disciples. Among others, Paul did this with Timothy. Paul addressed Timothy as his “true child in the faith” (1 Timothy 1:2). Do you have a spiritual child? Is there a newer or less mature believer you are discipling in the faith? This could be someone you lead to Christ or someone who is simply a new believer. Are you actively seeking to help new believers grow into maturity and live the Christian life? Is this something you could begin to pray about doing?
- **Do you have a Paul?** Paul is Timothy’s spiritual parent and mentor in the faith? Do you have a believer that you look to for discipleship or wisdom? This may be a pastor or a simply another believer that is father along than you are to help you grow? Who are the people who taught you the faith? The author of Hebrews reminds us to remember those who taught us the Word of God. He urges us to consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith (Hebrews 13:7). How might you benefit from forming this type of relationship with a more mature brother or sister? How could the Lord use this type of mentoring relationship benefit your spiritual growth?
- **Do you have a Barnabas?** Paul and Barnabas are co-laborers in the gospel. Barnabas accompanied Paul on his missionary journeys, shared the gospel and helped establish church, and was a companion and support for Paul. Do you have a spiritual friend to encourage and support you in ministry? How have these people contributed to your growth? God never intended for us to live the Christian life alone. If you do not have this type of relationship, try and identify one or two other believers of the same sex that you can share life with, pray together and be encourage as you see to multiply the gospel.

## NOW WHAT DO WE DO?

### Group Discussion & Application

Use the following questions to help review the application of God’s Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- Why does division and disunity among His children over the gift of church unity grieve the heart of God? How are the issues of unity and leadership within the church related?
- What is carnal Christianity? How would you define it? How would you describe this to a new Christian or to an unbeliever?
- Paul seems to suggest in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 that it is possible to have the Spirit of God and not act like it. How does carnality stunt growth? How do we fight against this? Have you ever noticed this pattern in your own life? What did you do to correct it?
- Paul uses the analogy of an infant growing from eating milk to solid food to describe Christian growth. Here are you in this process? There is nothing wrong with new believers needing the basics, but are you actively and continually progressing in the faith? What types of practices can you incorporate in your life to ensure that you continue to grow towards Christ-likeness?
- Why is it not possible to lose your salvation? How would you respond to someone who said they received Jesus as Savior but not as Lord? How would you respond to someone who claims to be a Christian but has exhibited no change in their life?
- Have all the people in your group who are following Christ been baptized? If not, why not? Graciously remind them that baptism is a command. Was anyone baptized earlier in life before they truly began to follow Christ? If so, have they been baptized as a believer?

## Small Group Guide

### THE CROSS AND CHRISTIAN UNITY

*The Church at Brook Hills*

*Dr. Jim Shaddix*

*May 19, 2013*

*1 Corinthians 3:1-23*

---

- Read 1 Corinthians 3:3-4. Carnality is always rooted in vanity. Are there areas of vanity in your own life? Call out to God this week and ask Him to reveal any areas of vanity in your own heart. Ask Him to help us as a faith family identify any areas of vanity and disunity to turn over to Him.
- While leaders are a God-given gift in the church, why should we never lose sight of who is the star of the gospel? In what ways are you tempted to look to leaders in the church for things you should be getting from God?
- Read 1 Corinthians 3:5-17. Review three images Paul gives to describe the church. What do each of these images teach us about the church and about the gospel? What other metaphors does the Bible use to describe the church? How are these helpful when speaking to non-believers? Who could you share this with over the next week?
- How does the Bible speak about rewards? Do you actively serve the Lord knowing that your reward is in heaven?
- The church is God's temple. The temple represented God's presence among His people. Does the life you lead reflect that you are a temple of the Living God? What attitudes and actions in your own life diminish the glory and worth of God?
- Read 1 Corinthians 3:21-23. What does it mean that all things are yours in Christ? How does this change the way you think about leaders in the church? Do you pray for our leaders? How can you better encourage leaders in our faith family?