

Believers and Nonbelievers
(for the week of October 25, 2020)

Note to Group Leaders: More than anyone else, you are aware of the size of your group, time constraints, the needs of your group, etc. Please read through the Scripture and material below and use whatever you believe will be most helpful to your group.

This Week's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

Key Idea from Sermon

“Believers in Jesus Christ are called to live in the world, but not of it.”

Discussing the Scripture

1. Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1. What would you say Paul's general theme in these verses is? Why do you think he wrote these verses? (In other words, what do you think his concern was?) (See also, 1 Corinthians 10:21)

2. Write out each of Paul's five rhetorical questions he asks in verses 14-16. What appears to be the implied answer in each of his questions?

3. In verse 14, “Paul is not addressing the issue of marriage between believers and unbelievers here; rather, he is urging the Corinthians to avoid aligning themselves with those who view him (and others) according to false standards. In allowing these unbelievers to have influence, the Corinthians cause rebellion against Paul and dissolve the unity of the church in Corinth” (Faithlife Study Bible).

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16. How might being joined (or, yoked) together with the “false standards” of nonbelievers negatively impact the church-at-large, or individual Christians?

4. What are some examples of the world's "false standards"? Can you think of any that Christians have adopted? The church-at-large?

5. Read 1 John 2:15-17. How do John's words support Paul's teaching in this lesson's Scripture?

6. John 3:16 declares that God loves the world so much that he sent his only Son to redeem it. Yet, 1 John 2:15 says we are not to love the world. How would you explain this apparent disagreement?

7. Read John 17:13-19. What does Jesus say in these verses about the relationship between the "world" to Jesus and his disciples? Explain what he means. How do these words relate to the Apostle Paul's words in this lesson's Scripture?

8. An oft-used phrase is that Christians are called to "live *in* the world but not *of* it." Explain what you believe that means.

According to Jesus' words from Question 7, how can a believer faithfully remain "in the world, but not of it?"

9. In verse 16, Paul says we are the temple of the living God. This "refers to the whole body of Christ, the total Christian community" (NIV Study Bible). In verses 16-18, Paul quotes the Old Testament promises that declare if God's people remain faithful to him by separating themselves from the surrounding influence of the world, he will receive us and be a Father to us.

How can we show our love for those in the world without compromising with the world's standards?

10. How can believers faithfully live according to God's standards without appearing judgmental to those of the world we are seeking to love?

Applying the Scripture

11. What is the hardest part for you about "living in the world, but not of it?"
12. What makes that difficult for you?
13. What are some ways church members can support one another to live faithful Christian lives in a world that may resist God's standards?
14. How can we love and serve our neighbors and bear witness to the grace and truth of Christ, without offending them in our sensitive cultural climate? Is it even possible?
15. List three nonbelievers you know and begin praying for them each day. Ask the Lord to begin the work of drawing them to himself. Pray for opportunities to love and serve them with Christlike words and deeds.

ACTS (A prayer guide for this lesson)

- A – Adoration (What did you learn about God in this lesson? Offer some words of praise and adoration for what you learned about God.)
- C – Confession (Was there a sin or struggle this lesson helped you see in yourself more clearly. Confess this to God and ask him to help you turn from it and toward greater spiritual growth. Read 1 John 1:9)
- T – Thanksgiving (What spiritual truth did you learn in this lesson? Spend time thanking God for revealing it to you.)
- S – Supplication (Pray for any needs of the members of your group, including their spiritual needs.)

John Wesley's Questions for Self-Examination

- Morning
 - Was God my last thought before sleeping and my first thought upon waking?
- Evening
 - Have I allowed myself to feel and share my neighbor's joy or sorrow?
 - Have I responded to my neighbor's weaknesses with understanding rather than with irritation?