

CHRIST Series: Realness and Relationship - Study 2

Read our mission statement:

To know Christ and make Him known, that all may become His fully devoted disciples.

Making Him Known

Do you remember hearing this Christian song's lyrics? Maybe you remember the tune or some verses?

*We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
And we pray that our unity will one day be restored
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
Yeah they'll know we are Christians by our love.*

What do you think are Jesus' hopes for his disciples?

In the Bible book of John, in between the uncomfortable, troubling stories of the disciple who would betray Jesus and the story of Jesus foretelling Peter's denial, sits these words.

Read the following Bible verses.

John 13:34-35

Jesus is promising that others will come to know him by our love for fellow Christians.

1. How well do you feel you/we are making Jesus known by our love?
2. Do outsiders look at us - our own family, our Life Group, our church family or the Lutheran Church and by our love know that we belong to Jesus?

Where It Starts

I'm sure we let Jesus down greatly in this way.

Once again, our starting point should be our vertical relationship with Christ.

As humans, on our own, this loving others business is no easy task. We often joke, if it wasn't for people this world would be so much easier!

Read the following Bible verses.

Romans 5:6-8

Ephesians 2:4-5

1. How has Jesus loved us?
2. What do these verses say about your relationship with Christ?
3. How do you feel about this?

What We Are Called To

Read the following Bible verses.

You might want to pause after each Bible reading to reflect on the questions below.

Ephesians 5: 13-15

Ephesians 4: 1-6

Phillipians 2: 1-4

John 15:9-12

1. Christ has gifted us with so much more than we deserve. According to these verses, what are some of

the things he asks of us in return?

2. What do these Bible verses say Christ is calling us into?

Christ calls us up out of the muck of our sin, to amazingly be ambassadors for him.

Just like Jesus chose to use Peter even after he denied him three times, he is ready to give us another chance.

How unthinkable that he trusts us with this task!

Read the following Bible verses.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Colossians 3:12-15

3. What stands out to you in these Bible verses?

4. How can we be Christ's ambassadors even when we disagree with others? How can you show respect and love for them?

Some Things to Think About;

1. Instead of wanting to impose my viewpoint on others, am I willing and able to engage in respectful discussion with those who have a differing opinion from me?

2. Do I avoid disagreement or conflict and prefer to change the topic, or ignore it?

3. In my heart, do I regard those who disagree with me as my brothers and sisters in God's family, brought together by his grace? Do I truly love them as Christ loves me?

4. Am I willing to consider an issue from the point of view of the person with whom I disagree?

5. Am I able to view other people's opinions, not as right or wrong or to be condemned, but simply as different from mine?

6. Do I feel the pain of others around the topic we disagree on?

7. Am I genuinely able to reach out to a hurting person who has a different belief from me, and offer them care and support?

8. Am I aware of my capacity to hurt others through how I express myself?

9. Am I aware that my beliefs on many issues may be formed and influenced not just by my understanding of scripture, theology and the church, but also by my personality, prejudices and life experiences?

10. Do I pray for those who believe differently from me – not that they will be converted to my viewpoint, but that they and I will be blessed as we serve alongside one another?

11. Do I harbour any bad feelings or awkwardness towards those with different viewpoints?

12. Do I long to see our church members always act with respect and integrity, and in God-pleasing ways even as they disagree?

5. Which of these 'Things to Think About' are easy and which are harder for you?
6. What would you like to get better at?

Your Challenge This Week and Beyond

1. Who do you find it difficult to understand/ listen to/ love?

Maybe you could search them out this week or the next time you see them and sincerely ask them about their viewpoints. Invite the Holy Spirit to join you.

Ensure that you listen well and love them greatly.

2. Our Life Groups are a great place to practice the things we mentioned above.

As a Life Group, practice really listening to each other well, despite your differing viewpoints. This will help grow your level of trust and vulnerability, and enable you to become real with each other and God.

Don't be afraid of apologising or asking for forgiveness where you have previously judged or inadvertently offended someone.

And remember to offer your forgiveness to others just as Jesus has done for you!

Prayer Time

Seek God in a time of confession together, admitting where you have been quick to judge or misunderstand each other.

Ask God to help you to be better at listening and respecting each other.

Where someone has hurt you, ask Jesus for his healing.

Invite the Holy Spirit to help you.

A Blessing

From 2 Corinthians 13: 11 & 14

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice!

Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace.

And the God of love and peace will be with you.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.