

Sunday, March 3rd

Scripture Reading: Matthew 18:15-20

Insight: We continue this week to look at what it is to be in the Body of Christ together. Being in relationships means there will inevitably be conflict. How we handle this conflict determines if we can stay in relationship with one another and how healthy those relationships can be.

Prayer: God of Peace, we can easily see conflict as being detrimental and the reason to avoid relationships altogether. Help us to see conflict as opportunities for growth and growth in you. Amen.

Monday, February 25th

Scripture Reading: Matthew 18:15

Insight: In the Body of Christ, in the church, it is important in general and to Jesus that we are willing and able to reconcile ourselves one to another when we sin against others. It is also important for this to happen, at least initially, privately so that the focus is on resolution and not making it into a production or spectacle.

Prayer: Almighty God, when I experience conflict with another within the Body, help me to go to them directly with love and compassion seeking to heal whatever divisions there might be through your power and love. Amen.

-Reflection: How do you normally respond to conflict, especially within the church? Do you tend to address it with the person

directly? Do you talk to others seeking to get them involved or to resolve it for you? Or do you ignore it allowing it to fester? How do you respond and why?

Action Step: Make a list or draw a mind map of ways you currently show love to others. Categorize your list into family, friends, co-workers, church peers, and strangers.

Tuesday, February 26th

Scripture Reading: Matthew 18:16

Insight: As humans, our emotions shape our perception of what happened in a given situation as well as the ramifications of what was said and done. If the initial attempt to resolve the conflict was unsuccessful, Jesus tells us to bring others with us who can objectively speak to what occurred. Again, not for the sake of teaming up on someone, but to try to bring about positive and healthy reconciliation on the individual to the Body.

Prayer: Loving God, one of our greatest goals is to be right. When we find ourselves in conflict, help us to focus on reconciliation above all; especially about our selfish desires. Amen.

Reflection: Two of the key aspects of finding resolution to conflict are being willing to listen and to acknowledge that we may be wrong. These actions require vulnerability. Is it easy for you to be vulnerable instead of defensive in times of conflict? What makes it easier? What makes it harder?

Action Step: Find a stick you can easily break apart. Think of a time that you did something for someone with less-than-loving motives. Meditate for a few minutes on that situation. Consider how the other person received your actions. As you meditate, break off pieces of the stick and consider how being unloving can chip away at your own heart as well as theirs.

Wednesday, February 27th

Scripture Reading: Matthew 18:17

Insight: An aspect of this verse we often overlook is that, if bringing the offending party before the Body fails, they are then to be treated as a Gentile and a tax collector. However, how did Jesus treat Gentiles and tax collectors? He actively worked to get them to follow him, and he called his followers to do the same.

Prayer: Reconciling God, even when our relationships with others seem to be beyond repair, help us even in these moments to see that you desire us to work to reconcile them with the community. Help us to know that you call us to never "write someone off". Amen.

Reflection: Even when conflict has caused someone to leave or be removed from our Body, God still calls us not to give up on them but continuing to try to bring them back into the fold. Do you agree with this? If so, how do you practice this? If not, why?

Action Step: Think of a relationship in your life in which you feel loved for who you are; one in which you feel unconditionally loved. Write a letter, poem, or song describing that relationship, or draw a picture.

Thursday, February 28th

Scripture Reading: Matthew 18:18-19

Insight: These verses are difficult to understand. Is Jesus saying whatever we do here has eternal implications and dictates whatever happens in God's Kingdom, or is Jesus telling us the nature of the church, and how we operate within it is lasting? Whatever it is, we don't know exactly, except to say what we say and how we handle these situations have lasting implications and are important to God.

Prayer: God who cares of all, help me to take seriously the responsibility of addressing conflict lovingly so that I can help bring about the resolution you desire. Amen.

Reflection: Do you ever find that the uncomfortableness of conflict causes you to want to get out of the situation at, virtually, any cost? What can help you stay present in the situation to help find God's desired goal?

Action Step: Listen to one or two of your favorite songs about love, whether hymns or praise music or sappy love songs. Think about how your ability to act lovingly toward others has developed over time.

Friday, March 1st

Scripture Reading: Matthew 18:20

Insight: While we often take this verse out of context, we hear from Jesus here that even in the midst of struggling to resolve our conflict Jesus is present. Not just in times of peace and bliss is Jesus there, but also in those times of fighting and division when we continue to remain engaged to for the sake of him, he is there.

Prayer: Courageous God, help me to be brave in the midst of conflict remembering as I strive for your will, you are present with me. Amen.

Reflection: I don't believe any of us really "enjoy" conflict, but Jesus reminds us that he is present with us in the midst of it when we seek his good. When have you experienced Jesus in the midst of conflict?

Action Step: Are you currently involved in a ministry that makes the love of God known to others in a meaningful way? Are you serving in a capacity that fits with your talents, your spiritual gifts, and your availability? Does it bring you joy? If so, tell someone outside our church about the ministry. If not, begin to pray about where God is preparing you to serve. Contact Rev. Jen or Rev. Kris for help getting plugged into an ongoing ministry.

Saturday, March 2nd

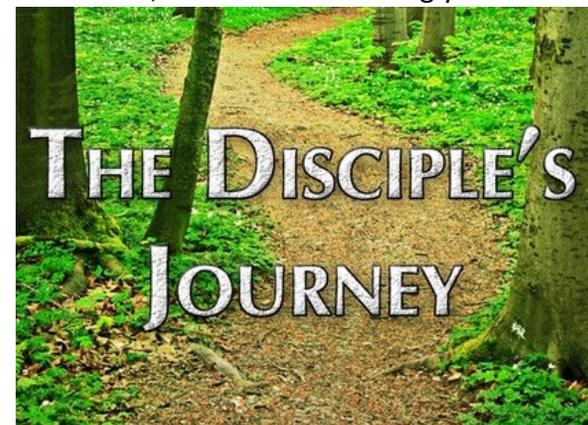
Scripture Reading: Matthew 18:15-20

Reflection: How has my understanding of conflict grown, changed, or been challenged

by my experience of the disciple's journey this week?

Sunday, March 3rd

Action Step: Join us this morning in worship at Quail Springs UMC at 8:30am, 9:45am, or 11:00am as we begin the next step in our Disciple's Journey together. Always remember, we are better having you with us.



FEBRUARY 24th
through
MARCH 3rd

Our Weekly Disciple's Journey is a tool to help you be more intentional about

following Jesus Christ and being faithful about what it is to be Christians. Our Disciple's Journey consist of Scripture readings and insights from them, daily prayers, points for reflection, and suggested actions steps you can take to make following Jesus Christ more tangible in your life.