



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of May 21, 2017

WEPC small groups meet in homes across Richmond every week to participate in Jesus Christ's mission to Richmond, enjoy fellowship, study God's Word, pray together, and explore the fruit of the Gospel on our lives. Simply put, these groups are small enough to be the church to one another, and they serve as bridges between WEPC and the community where God has planted us. It is a place where the church can go deeper in the worship of God and further in Christ's mission.

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a "worship discussion" guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

II Corinthians 6:14-7:1 *"We Are The Temple"*

^{6:14} Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵ What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,

"I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.

¹⁷ Therefore go out from their midst,
and be separate from them, says the Lord,
and touch no unclean thing;
then I will welcome you,
¹⁸ and I will be a father to you,
and you shall be sons and daughters to me,
says the Lord Almighty."

^{7:1} Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

- Have you ever entered into a terrible partnership? Why was it bad? How did it affect you? How did it end?
- Read II Corinthians 6:14-16a. What is a "yoke"? What does Paul mean by "unequally yoked"? Read [Deuteronomy 22:10](#) to understand the Biblical context for Paul's metaphor.
- What kinds of close relationships between believers and unbelievers does Paul have in mind in this prohibition?
- Paul sets up five contrasts to clarify his point. List these contrasts, and discuss the meaning of each one.
- Read II Corinthians 6:16b-7:1. It will be challenging or painful to forfeit certain relationships for God's sake. Paul uses multiple promises from the Old Testament to support his admonition and encourage the Corinthians ([Leviticus 26:11-12](#); [Isaiah 52:11](#); [Ezekiel 20:34](#); [II Samuel 7:14](#)). What does God promise His people in these verses?
- What do you think it means for the church today to "not be unequally yoked with unbelievers", to "be separate", and to "cleanse ourselves from every impurity of the body and spirit"?
- In what situations do you personally (and we as a church) find this passage challenging?
- Re-read today's Scripture passage aloud and use it as a guide to prayer for your group:
 - Ask God for wisdom and power to forgo "unequal" relationships in our lives and as a church.
 - Ask God for strength to persevere in trusting Him and what Jesus has promised to His people.
 - Thank God that He has made us Christ's peculiar people for His own glory.

Questions about this week's study guide? Contact Kevin Greene, kevin@wepc.org
To hear sermons and access past study guides visit www.wepc.org/archivedsermons

Sermon Notes

This week, Steve Shelby preached on II Corinthians 6:14-7:1

- Today's text in context. "We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. In return (I speak as to children) widen your hearts also." (II Corinthians 6:11-13)
- And then "Make room in your hearts for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one." (II Corinthians 7:2)
- In the middle of Paul's appeal to the Corinthians there is today's text.
- His call for not being unequally yoked is an interesting phrase. His wording resembles some Old Testament words.
- "You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest the whole yield be forfeited, the crop that you have sown and the yield of the vineyard. You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. You shall not wear cloth of wool and linen mixed together." (Deuteronomy 22:9-11)
- Then Paul asks 5 questions: "What partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? What fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? What portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of the living God with idols?"
- Paul's admonition is not a general statement against association with unbelievers or pagan idolaters. It is against his adversaries in Corinth.
- "I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— 10 not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one." (I Corinthians 5:9-11)
- A quick note about marriage, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/dont-take-it-from-me-reasons-you-should-not-marry-an-unbeliever>
- The key to understanding these texts has to do with our understanding of where one acquires their identity.
- Participation in salvation is not merely a matter of morality, but it is a matter of personal relationship.
- With whom are you "yoked"?
- He re-enforces that with this lengthy compilation of some Old Testament quotations.
- "The fulfilment of the promise that we have become God's people and he has become our God is in view here.
- God is building a community that exist in covenant relationship with Himself and among the members. Tim Keller notes in his book on marriage that a covenant "creates a particular kind of bond . . . a relationship far more intimate and personal than a merely legal, business relationship. Yet at the same time, it is far more durable, binding, and unconditional than one based on mere feeling and affection. A covenant relationship is a stunning blend of law and love. When the Bible speaks about the church, it refers to it as a covenant community. Church members aren't just part of a shared interest group. They're covenanted to one another by a sacred promise to oversee one another's membership in the kingdom and faithfulness to King Jesus (Matt 18:15–20). The New Testament unfolds the details of that sacred promise: We regularly gather together (Heb 10:24–25), bear one another's burdens and sorrows (Gal 6:2), encourage one another (Heb 3:12–14), pray for one another (Jas 5:16), and forgive one another (Col 3:13). Many churches helpfully formalize these biblical instructions into a church covenant, a set of promises members make to one another when they enter into membership. These covenant obligations are the foundations of our church commitment and should function as the backbone to church life. Covenant precedes community. We might even say covenant creates community. The covenant promises members make to one another blossom into the life-giving relationships our hearts crave. Rooting commitment in our covenant promises doesn't mean that church relationships are nothing but soulless duty. Instead, covenant commitments are the food that nourishes our relationships with other members. The more we hold ourselves to our covenant promises, the more our relationships blossom and endure through seasons of difficulty. Again, as de Botton perceptively notes in his article, 'Compatibility is an achievement of love, it must not be its precondition.' The world argues that affection is pre-requisite to commitment. But the biblical picture is actually quite the opposite: commitment and service create affection. I'm amazed at how this principle works out even in my own life. A few years ago, after a couple in our church had a baby, my wife and I signed up through the church's member care ministry to bring them a meal. Our act of service, however, wasn't rooted in a pre-existing relationship with this couple. In fact, we barely knew them. We simply wanted to be faithful to our covenant promises to 'bear one another's burdens'. Yet that service, rooted in our covenant commitment, ultimately blossomed into a sweet friendship between our two families. We weren't expecting a relationship to bloom, but that's what happens when you hold yourself to covenant promises, even with people you barely know." (Sam Emadi)
- The issue here then, is how we relate to one another within the community. Do we want to resemble our Creator and Redeemer or do we want to resemble our adversary?