

“You Asked For It”

Week 1

warm-up

Group Ice Breaker:

Can you think of a time when you offended someone you care about? What happened when you apologized? Did they offer forgiveness immediately, or did they drag it out? How would you describe your thoughts and emotions BEFORE you sought reconciliation? How about AFTER you experienced it?

word & application

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 2 Corinthians 5:14-20

Even though I am free of the demands and expectations of everyone, I have voluntarily become a servant to any and all in order to reach a wide range of people; religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized—whoever. I didn’t take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ—but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I’ve become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life. I did all this because of the Message. I didn’t just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!

“Our firm decision is to work from this focused center: One man died for everyone. That puts everyone in the same boat. He included everyone in his death so that everyone could also be included in his life, a resurrection life, a far better life than people ever lived on their own. Because of this decision we don’t evaluate people by what they have or how they look. We looked at the Messiah that way once and got it all wrong, as you know. We certainly don’t look at him that way anymore. Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone; a new life burgeons! Look at it! All this comes from the God who settled the relationship between us and him, and then called us to settle our relationships with each other. God put the world square with himself through the Messiah, giving the world a fresh start by offering forgiveness of sins. God has given us the task of telling everyone what he is doing. We’re Christ’s representatives. God uses us to persuade men and women to drop their differences and enter into God’s work of making things right between them. We’re speaking for Christ himself now: Become friends with God; he’s already a friend with you.”

Discussion & Application: Explore these questions through in-depth conversation

- On a scale of 1 – 10, with “1” being “I see the lost but don’t really enter their world to understand their perspective” and “10” being “I immerse myself in the world in order to understand how to serve the lost”, how would you rate your daily life?
- When you see people who live in a way that you disagree with, do you choose to be offended, or to see them as forgiven, with a fresh start?
- How would you describe your ability to live mercifully in every minute-by-minute situation you encounter on a daily basis?
- Would you describe yourself as a person who God can trust with the soul of a lost person? Why or why not? How can you improve this capacity?

prayer

Share recent “God moments” in your life. Pray over requests. Pray that God increases our capacity to truly embrace a merciful world view, drawing us into a choice to serve instead of judge, increasing our capacity for Him to trust us with lost souls.