



To Be or Not to Be - Week 2 Be Gracious, Not Harsh - Discussion & Reflection Guide

Questions and Prompts:

- **Has anyone ever shown you grace when you didn't deserve it?** What do you remember about how they treated you and what it meant to you?
- **What stood out to you from Sunday's service?** How did you sense God at work in you through the songs and the message? (The message's main points and scripture are listed below if it helps you think back.)
- Eddie shared that the Bible is a mirror that invites us to examine ourselves first. **Take a moment to pause and ask yourself to honestly answer: Am I a genuinely gracious person?** Do people hear gracious words from me, or harsh words? Have I been following Jesus long enough that my first response to broken people is compassion – or am I instinctively unsympathetic? **Share a little of your reflection with your group or a trusted friend.**
- **Read Romans 12:14-19.** Have someone read the passage out loud if you're in a group.
 - Is there a word or phrase that stands out from this scripture?
 - Is there a person or a situation that comes to mind as you hear these words?
 - Eddie shared, "when we are treated badly, we are called to respond graciously." How do these verses challenge you?
- **Pause to reflect:** Think about the person or people who have been your most recent nemesis. Use one or two of the questions below:
 - How are you responding to that person?
 - Are you refusing to curse them?
 - Do you ask God to bless them – to make good things happen for them?
 - Do you refuse to repay their insults and gossip with insults and gossip?
 - Do you require yourself to convey peace instead of conflict?
 - Do you work to win them over, or fantasize about running them over?
 - Do you see mistreatment by others as a test of your courage, or a test of your character?
 - Are you determined to be right, or are you determined to be righteous?
- Eddie shared that "a key attribute of a gracious person is gentleness," but that gentleness is often viewed as a disadvantage or as undesirable.

- **Who is one person who is an example of godly gentleness to you?** How do they display their gentleness?
 - **Do you ever think of God as being gentle?** Eddie invited us to take a closer look at God's gentleness. Read Jesus' words in Matthew 11:29. **How does this encourage you? How does it challenge you?**
- **Is there anything else from the message you want to explore more deeply this week?**

We hope you'll use this guide to take the teaching from Sunday's service and reflect on it with a few friends or with a group. If you have questions or want to talk more about how to take your next spiritual step, contact us at info@wschurch.org.

Message Main Points & Scripture

- **Be gracious.**
- **To be gracious is to be generous in some way.**
- **The gracious response is always the best response.**
- Galatians 5:22 – “The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love... patience... kindness... goodness... gentleness.”
- Romans 12:14-18 – “Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them, but pray that God will bless them... Live in harmony with each other... Never pay back evil with more evil... Do all you can to live in peace with everyone.”
- **When we are treated badly, we are called to respond graciously.**
- Matthew 5:11 - “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven.”
- **A key attribute of a gracious person is gentleness.**
- **We view gentleness as a disadvantage.**
- **Being gracious is a character trait, not a personality trait.**
- 1 Peter 3:15 – “If someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear.”
- Philippians 4:5 – “Let your gentleness be evident to all.”
- Matthew 11:29 - “Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart.”
- **Dear servant – take a closer look at your Master.**