

**LifeGroup Study**  
**GOOD INTENTIONS BAD IDEAS**  
**LIFE IS A BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD PEOPLE AND EVIL PEOPLE!?**  
**2022-10-30**  
**Leader Notes**

**OVERVIEW:**

Welcome back to our series, “Good Intentions Bad Ideas”! Over these three weeks, we’re looking at 3 cultural myths that can mess with our minds. We’re learning how we can see these myths for what they are and live in a different way, the Way of Jesus. Our myth for week 3 is, “Life is a battle between good people and evil people”. Making broad generalizations that people are either good or evil is a mistake. We're all a mixed bag. If we go around labeling ideas and groups that differ from ours we will miss out on many opportunities to learn. The challenge for this week is that you would seek to understand a group or idea that you disagree with. The Church across history and across the globe is large and diverse. We should celebrate what we can learn from each other.

**ICEBREAKER:** They Get Me

Think about the people in your life who “get you”, the people who know you and appreciate you for who you are. What do they say or how to they interact with you that shows you they “get” you. Can you think of a specific time when you really felt this? **Share your story with the group!**

**STUDY:**

On Sunday Pete addressed the cultural myth, “Life is a battle between good people and evil people.”

- **How were you challenged or inspired by what Pete shared?**

Read **Galatians 5:13-15**

<sup>13</sup>You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh<sup>[a]</sup>; rather, serve one another humbly in love. <sup>14</sup>For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>15</sup>If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

Pete reminded us that in the Apostle Paul’s day, there was all kinds of disagreement and division between Gentiles and Jews. But now, in Jesus, there is no more need for division. Let’s think about how this should inform the way we interact with people we disagree with.

- **Why is the “Love your neighbour as yourself” command so important for us to remember when we find ourselves disagreeing with someone?**

LEADER NOTES: In the heat of our disagreement, we can forget to love. It is important to remember the person we are disagreeing with is our neighbour! We have a lot more in common with our fellow human beings that we do differences.

- **What does it mean to “bite and devour” those we disagree with?**

LEADER NOTES: To bite and devour is to attack with intention to destroy an argument or even hurt a person. When we focus all our energy on a disagreement we can forget that our words have the power to hurt others. Making sweeping statements (ex. “Let me tell you something about those people …”) name calling, verbal attack – these have no place in the approach and attitude of followers of Christ.

### THE FOUNDATION IS LOVE

When we disagree with someone, our purpose is not to win an argument or sway them toward our perspective. Our greatest goal is to love. This is the foundation. Let’s explore this idea together.

#### **Ephesians 4:2-3**

<sup>2</sup> Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

- **What does it mean to “bear with one another in love”**

LEADER NOTES: The Greek word translated from “*bear with*” means “to take responsibility for again and again.” The idea here is to be continually enduring, tolerating or bearing with each other. *Bearing with* carries with it the idea of showing grace to others, being generous in the way we perceive and respond to others. In all of this, love is the ethic.

- Think about other key words in these verses, “humble, gentle, patient, unity.” **How do these words speak to you about what it looks like to love someone we disagree with?**

LEADER NOTES: To be humble is to realize that I may be wrong, or I may have something to learn. To be gentle is to approach disagreement with care and grace. To be patient is to allow for faults, to take the time to listen and understand. Unity is about relational harmony.

“Remember that nobody is always right or always wrong. We all have a mix of informed, uninformed and ill-informed opinions. Dropping the belief that you are always more right than others is an exercise in humility, and a reality check.” Mark Sanborn

## 5 WAYS TO LOVE THOSE YOU DISAGREE WITH

(Source - <https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/biblical-ways-to-love-those-you-disagree-with.html>)

Look at the Bible passages and questions below to explore 5 ways to love people you disagree with.

### 1. LISTEN to hear the person behind the words.

Listening well helps us understand *why* the person believes what they do. This goes beyond simply acknowledging what they are saying.

“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” James 1:19

#### - **What does it look like to be “quick to listen”?**

LEADER NOTES: Listening is tough, especially when we disagree with the person who is talking! Being quick to listen is about listening first, before we speak. Listening well means making the effort to understand what the other person is saying and what motivates them to say what they do. Rather than formulating a reply in our mind while they are speaking, we put our complete attention on seeking to understand the intent of their message.

#### - **How is it helpful to be “slow to speak”?**

LEADER NOTES: When we disagree it is tempting to say so quickly and loudly! James tells us, “be slow to speak”. In other words, think carefully before you speak. Ask, “Is what I am about to say truthful and loving?” “Will my words encourage unity and peace, or division and strife?” Being slow to speak means taking time to consider these things instead of just firing off a response.

#### - **When talking with someone you disagree with, why is it so important to remember to be “slow to become angry?”**

LEADER NOTES: You know what it’s like to feel anger welling up in you. Anger is an emotion that can quickly get out of hand. This is why James says to us to be “... slow to become angry.” Rather than allowing anger to boil over, we can refocus our energy on love.

### 2. Be HUMBLE in attitude and response.

Jesus was humble in the way he related with other people, even with those who adamantly disagreed with Him. When we are humble, we put ourselves in a posture where we can learn and grow from our interactions with others.

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.” Philippians 2:3

#### - **“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit ...” How can you avoid being selfish or conceited when you are talking with someone you disagree with?**

LEADER NOTES: Ask questions like, “How can I understand this person more?” or “How’s my attitude in this interaction? I am arrogant, smug, conceited?” These kinds of questions can raise our level of self-awareness and help us avoid being selfish and conceited.

- **What does it mean to “consider others more significant than yourselves”?**

LEADER NOTES: To consider another more significant is to respect them for their opinion, honour them by listening to them and seek to understand and value them as a person, even if we disagree with their viewpoint.

“Assume that the person you are listening to might know something you don’t.” Jordan Peterson

3. LAMENT with the broken-hearted.

There are times when we can come alongside people who are hurting and just be with them, even if cannot fully relate to their experience.

“The LORD is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” Psalm 34:18

- Have you had the experience of coming alongside someone, or having someone come alongside you to lament? **Share your story with the group.**

4. PRAY for their well-being

READ: Matthew 5:44-48

<sup>44</sup> But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. <sup>46</sup> If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? <sup>48</sup> Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- **Why is it important to pray for the well-being of those we disagree with?**

LEADER NOTES: When we pray for our enemies, God may not change their hearts, but He is more likely to change ours. Although our opinions about the disagreement may not change, our attitude toward the person can change as we pray. God can use prayer to grow in us a heart of love for those we disagree with.

5. REJOICE in the truth.

“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:32

- **How might we “rejoice in the truth” when we disagree with someone?**

LEADER NOTE:

Rejoicing in the truth is about keeping what is true about God and His Word at the forefront of our mind and response. When we pray for someone to know the truth, rather than praying they will come to see things our way, we should pray that they would come to see the truth about God and His love for them (see John 14:6). The ultimate cause for our rejoicing is not that we would win an argument but that people would be brought into a right relationship with God through His Son.

When we take an eternal perspective toward those we disagree with, we can be assured we are behaving as followers of Christ, and not as a spokesman for the issue of the day. Melanie Campbell

- Look back at the 5 steps to loving someone you disagree with. **Which one do you most sense God might be prompting you to look into more or put into practice?**

**PRAYER**

Lord, thank You for being a God who loves us all the time, even when we mess up, even when we don't love others as we should. Help us to see others as you see them, people who are deeply loved and valued by You. Give us wisdom to remember that when we find ourselves disagreeing with others. When we disagree, help us to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. Rather than responding in anger, help us to respond in love. Rather than seeking to win an argument, help us to seek to win others to You. Thank you for your patience with us. Thank You for your forgiveness and love. Lord, help us to show that same patience, forgiveness and love to others, especially to those we disagree with. We ask these things in the Name of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

