

life groups

NLC Life Group Through the Bible Study
Extension Campus A

Week of October 8, 2017

Sermon: Real Love in an Angry World
—The Reality of Rejection



NEW LIFE
CHURCH

Life Group Schedule

15 MIN Eat, Meet & Greet

15 MIN Ice Breaker Game: **M&Ms**. This icebreaker is a simple way to help people introduce facts about themselves. It's very flexible and adaptable – and (if you have a sweet tooth) delicious too! **Setup:** Pour M&Ms or any other multicolor candy into a bowl. Have everyone in the group grab as much or as little as they like from the bowl. Make sure that no one eats their candy right away. **How to Play:** For each piece of M&M candy they took, they will have to answer a question, depending on its color. For example, you can designate:

- › Red candy: favorite hobbies
- › Green candy: favorite foods
- › Yellow candy: favorite movies
- › Orange candy: favorite places to travel
- › Brown candy: most memorable or embarrassing moments
- › Blue candy: wild cards (they can share anyone they choose)

NOTE: Do as much or as little of the study material as you need, but make it a goal to engage in meaningful conversations, to encourage each other, and to pray for each other.

OPENING PRAYER

45–60 MIN *Real Love in an Angry World—The Reality of Rejection*

Q1. Have you ever been rejected?

- The word “rejection” comes from a Latin word meaning “to be thrown back.”
- When we are rejected, we feel not only halted but pushed back in the opposite direction of which we were headed.
- Psychology of Rejection. When scientists placed people in functional MRI machines and asked them to recall a recent rejection, they discovered something amazing. The same areas of our brain become activated when we experience rejection as when we experience physical pain. That’s why even small rejections hurt more than we think they should, because they elicit literal pain.
- Rejection can come from:
 - › something said—a judgment or critique.
 - › someone close to you—a family member or friend, a boss, co-worker, coach, spouse, or spiritual leader.
- In our culture—in the angry world we live in—there’s a big chance you will be rejected, because our culture is drifting away from God.
- There will be unbelievers who will not like what you believe in, no matter how much you love them.

- › All they will want you to do is agree with their issue. If you don't, you will get labeled as intolerant.
- There will be other Christians who are little bit more religious, and they will reject you as well.
 - › Jesus was criticized for eating with sinners. They didn't like the way Jesus "loved" people.
- When the world is aggressive and the religious suspicious, we need to stay steady.

READ LUKE 10:16

- Don't take rejection too personally, and don't take acceptance too personally either.
 - › It's not really about you. The message is about Jesus.
 - › People aren't choosing or rejecting us; they are choosing or rejecting Jesus, and when they choose or reject Jesus, they are choosing or rejecting God.

READ MATTHEW 24:12

- There are hard hearts out there. Cold souls. Some of us used to be one of them.
- We can all harden our hearts, but only God can soften a heart.
- The same sun melts wax AND ALSO hardens clay. Sometimes the Gospel melts hearts and turns them to repentance, and sometimes it hardens hearts. It's not really up to you. Everybody makes their own choice.

HOW TO DEAL WITH REJECTION

1. Remain Confident In Who You Are

HAVE SOMEONE HEBREWS 4:16

- It is common to be way too affected by criticism and the opinions of others.
- "If you live for people's acceptance, you'll die from their rejection." – Lecrae
- The world needs more men and women of God who are confident, not waiting on others to affirm them—men and women who don't fear rejection and whose world doesn't revolve around who likes them or not.
 - › These people love and serve others no matter what, confident that they are messengers of God.

HAVE SOMEONE READ JOHN 5:41-42

- You cannot follow Christ and make everyone happy!

- › Haters will see you walk on water and say it's because you can't swim.

HAVE SOMEONE READ JOHN 12:42-43

Q2. What are some practical ways to live as a God-pleaser, not worrying about whether people accept you, praise you, or affirm you? Do you live this way already?

2. Return Grace To Them.

- We need to be confident but not cocky.
- Can't just live our lives going around, "Yea I don't care about your approval! You're the one gonna burn anyway! See ya! Don't care."
- No! We have to be full of grace towards everyone.

READ JOHN 13:34

- You'll have the opportunity to respond with anger towards people who reject you, but we don't wrestle against flesh and blood.
 - › It means this is not a physical fight. It's a spiritual fight.
 - › People are not your enemy. Your Enemy is your enemy.
- We have too many believers fighting a spiritual fight with physical strategies.
 - › Someone rejects us. "I reject you back!"
 - › Someone critiques us. "I'll critique you!"
- How DO you fight back? With grace.

READ LUKE 23:34

- › The soldiers who arrested him then gambled for his clothes.
- › The crowd started mocking him, "You saved so many. Can you save yourself?"
- › They put a sign up over his head: "This is the King of the Jews."
- Jesus gave grace even in the midst of rejection. Remain confident in who you are. Return grace to them.

Q3. Have you ever wanted to hurt someone because of the way they rejected you? How did you respond, and how did that work out for you?

Q4. How do you respond with grace?

Q5. How do you respond with grace when you just don't want to—when you're at your wits' end and you don't think you have any grace to give?

3. Remember You Are Not Alone.

- Noah was rejected by his society. Joseph was rejected by his brothers. Moses was rejected by his followers. David was rejected by both his brothers, King Saul, and his own son. Elijah, Elisha, and Jeremiah were rejected by the kings of their day. The disciples were rejected by the religious people.
- Jesus was rejected by his family, his hometown, religious leaders, political leaders, and he is still rejected today.

HAVE SOMEONE READ JOHN 15:18-19.

- Jesus knows what it's like to feel rejected, even by the people closest to him. Peter denied him 3 times. Judas betrayed him. He was rejected by his brothers (John 7:5) and his friends (Matt. 13:57).
- You have not experienced anything that God has not experienced!
 - › Remain confident in who you are. Return grace. Remember you are not alone.
 - › The reality is God will surround you with other people who are going the same direction.
 - › However, in the end there is only one person we should seek approval from: GOD.

READ PSALM 118:22

HAVE SOMEONE READ ISAIAH 53:3 AND 1 PETER 2:4

Q6. Think about anyone in your life who has rejected you.

- › Choose to forgive them. Let them off the hook. Give them grace, and then let God heal your heart.
- › Hurting people hurt people, but healed people heal people!
- › If you can let go and give grace, you will be free to heal people.
- › God will use your painful feelings of rejection and you will understand the power of the feeling of acceptance.

Q7. On the flip side, is there anyone in your life whom you may have rejected? Ask the Holy Spirit what He wants you to do about that.

PRAY OVER NEEDS.

ANNOUNCEMENTS