

Participant Handout

Week 4: Spiritual Maturity and Seeing Gray

Focus Scripture

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.” (Matthew 18:1-5)

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

Taking It Home Exercises

- ∞ Read 1 Corinthians 13:9-12. The church in the Greek city of Corinth was torn by disputes over who was “right” on various issues. How did the apostle Paul challenge the Corinthians to view themselves and others in a more spiritually mature way? What do you hear God saying to *you* in these verses?
- ∞ Read Luke 22:24-27. What was one subject of discussion/dispute among the disciples just before the Last Supper? Read John 17:20-23. How did Jesus’ prayer for his followers reflect his concern about their tendency to divide over issues large and small? How is God calling you to respond to these two passages?
- ∞ Read Matthew 18:1-5. What have you learned so far about how to have a faith that is childlike without being childish? How are you maturing in humility, in trust, in your comfort with paradox and mystery? Talk with God about where you are and where you would like to be.
- ∞ Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-7. How do you measure up to Paul’s description of what a loving person looks like? In what key area do you most desire to grow more loving? What steps will you take to open yourself to God so that you can grow in that area?
- ∞ Read Ephesians 4:1-6. Are there individuals or groups, either inside or outside the walls of our congregation, which you struggle to accept as members of the body of Christ? Through prayer and reflection, identify what you will do to actively build a bridge of understanding and trust across the differences that separate you from them.