

# Life Group Sermon Series Study

2022-2023

Series Four



## “Better Together”



In 2020, I was shocked as I watched riots taking place in downtown Fort Wayne...little Fort Wayne. People were protesting against police brutality and unfair treatment of minority groups in Fort Wayne. It was motivated by the death of George Floyd. Those riots brought out the best and worst in people. As I was glued to the TV watching live, I kept thinking to myself, “Can’t we just get along?”

Since then we have seen more racial and religious attacks on people, churches, and organizations. There have been calls for unity, compromise, and peace, but it seems like it has not worked. One of the consequences of the pandemic is the anger and hatred that people have for each other. The calls for “we are better together” have fallen on deaf ears. It seems like all people care about is their perspective, their wants, and their needs. It seems we are blind to the “other side”, wanting only our perspectives, our wants, and our needs.

This is not a new problem. Jealousy, anger, hatred, prejudice, and violence have been around since Cain killed Abel. There is one man who preached and demonstrated a different perspective and command. His name was Jesus Christ. He focused on the heart, not just the mind. He looked to motivation more than action. He passed this on to the early church and through the apostles’ teachings.

In this series, we are going to look at the story Jesus told about the Good Samaritan and how we should love, deal with conflict, motivate each other, restore a fallen believer and act around a weaker believer in our families, friendships, neighborhoods, and the church. I truly believe that Jesus has the answers for our culture about how we can be better together and the model should be the church. That’s you and me. May we be obedient to the commands in scripture about how we should treat each other so that the world can look at LifeWater and truly say, “They are better together”.

For His Kingdom,

Pastor Doug

## “Better Together: Can’t we just get along”

Luke 10:25-37

### I. Purpose:

- A. To help us understand why our culture can’t get along.
- B. To help us know the steps to take to help our neighbor.
- C. To help us see who our neighbor is.

### II. Community that Cares:

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

### III. Community that Understands the Background:

A lawyer approached Jesus and asked a question, but it was not an authentic question. It was not a question that the lawyer really wanted the answer to. It was a question to test Jesus, trying to trap Him so the lawyer could catch Jesus in some faulty theology. The conversation didn’t go the way the lawyer thought it would go.

The lawyer asked, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” Not a bad question but one that was not sincere. Jesus points the lawyer back to the law and says, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” The lawyer was wise enough to answer, “Love God with everything you have and love your neighbor.” Jesus understood, very clearly, the gap between knowing and living and the gap between our minds and our heart. Jesus responds, “Do this and you will live.”

The lawyer wanted to “justify” himself. The word “justify” means “to be declared guiltless”. It is a legal term where the court finds the defendant innocent of all charges. In this context the judge and jury were God. This lawyer wanted to appear to be innocent of being ungodly. The only concern this man had been not his “love” for God, but his “love” for his neighbor. So he asked Jesus, “who is my neighbor”.

To that, Jesus tells a story with a “punch in the gut”. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was known to be a dangerous road where lots of crime and robbery occurred. Jesus’ story is about a man who is robbed and left for dead on this road. There were 3 men who passed this man on the road. A priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan. Jews hated Samaritans and Samaritans hated Jews. There was a strong prejudice and racial hatred between the two races. The two religious men passed by the injured man without doing anything.

The Samaritan man stopped and cared for the man. Then Jesus drives the point home as he asks the lawyer, “Which of these three do you think was the neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” Talk about mic drop!!! The lawyer’s only response was “The one who had mercy on him.” Then Jesus’ last words to the lawyer were “Go and do likewise”.

**IV. Community that Learns:**

- A. Review the points of the Pastor’s message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?
- B. Sermon outline: Better Together – Why Can’t We Get Along (Luke 10:25-37)
- C. 3 points to ponder:
  1. Lack of love we can try to justify, but it’s (\_\_\_\_\_) right.
  2. Our (\_\_\_\_\_) is anyone (no matter race, creed, religious belief, social economic standing) who is in need.
  3. Love is the action of meeting a person’s (\_\_\_\_\_).

**V. Community that Applies:**

- A. Who are the Samaritans in your life? (Be honest)
- B. Why do you think the two religious men did nothing? (Their excuses)
- C. What are some of our excuses today for not helping people in need?
- D. Why do you think that the Samaritan did something?

E. What does this tell us about the Samaritan’s heart? The religious leader’s heart?

F. Is your heart more like the Samaritan or the religious leaders?

VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about Jesus’ story?

VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes praying about your next step.

VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

A. The scripture next week is 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

B. If you missed Sunday’s sermon, watch online at [www.lifewatercc.org](http://www.lifewatercc.org) before the next Life Group.

C. Reflect on next week’s questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

## **“Better Together: Love”**

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

### **I. Purpose:**

- A. To help us understand what love really is.
- B. To help us know why love is important in relationships.
- C. To help us see how love impacts the church.

### **II. Community that Cares:**

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

### **III. Community that Understands the Background:**

One of the most common scriptures to be read or sung about in weddings is 1 Corinthians 13. It shows up in the counseling sessions of Christian counselors and marriage therapists. It is used to teach engaged couples about how marriage should function. It is a model for how a husband and wife should treat each other. It has brought comfort to many marriages that have been in trouble, where betrayal has happened, and reconciliation is being attempted.

What is interesting about this passage is that Paul is not talking about love between a husband and wife. He is talking about the love between fellow Christians in the church. He is talking about the spiritual gifts functioning in one place. He is talking about what happens when those spiritual gifts conflict. Paul is speaking about the attitudes and actions of Christians with each other. In the context of 1 Corinthians 13, Paul is addressing the lack of love in the church at Corinth as believers exercised their spiritual gifts.

In the final analysis, love is more important than any spiritual gift, no matter how amazing it is. Great faith, acts of dedication and sacrifice, and miracle-working power produce little without love. Love is just as important in the church as it is in our marriages. But the love that Paul describes here is a love of action, not emotion. Paul is convinced that love reaches its pinnacle when we make the decision to love anyway-- to love out of choice.

IV. **Community that Learns:**

- A. Review the points of the Pastor’s message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?
- B. Sermon outline: Better Together – Love (1 Corinthians 13:1-13)
- C. 3 important points to consider about love in relationships:
  1. Love is key to the (\_\_\_\_\_). 1 Corinthians 13:1-3
  
  2. Love is key in (\_\_\_\_\_) relationships. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
  
  3. Love is the greatest (\_\_\_\_\_). 1 Corinthians 13:8-13; Matthew 22:36-40

V. **Community that Applies:**

- A. How can different spiritual gifts cause problems in a church?
  
- B. Why do you think Paul described love in this way?
  
- C. Why do you think Christians use this passage for describing love within marriage?
  
- D. Do you think it is possible for Christians to love in this way? Why or why not?
  
- E. In your opinion, what hinders Christians from loving in this way?

VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing in your marriage or relationships because of what you learned about love?

VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes praying about your next step.

VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

A. The scripture next week is Matthew 18:15-20.

B. If you missed Sunday’s sermon, watch online at [www.lifewatercc.org](http://www.lifewatercc.org) before the next Life Group.

C. Reflect on next week’s questions during your five minutes of daily silence.



## **“Better Together: Conflict”**

Matthew 18:15-20

### **I. Purpose:**

- A. To help us understand how to deal with conflict in a healthy way.
- B. To help us know the steps to take when in conflict with someone.
- C. To help us see that the church leadership is here to help you solve the conflict you have with others.

### **II. Community that Cares:**

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

### **III. Community that Understands the Background:**

Jesus said, “For where 2 or 3 come together in my name, there I am with them.” I heard a pastor say one time, “When 2 or 3 come together in Jesus’ name there will be conflict.” Even though this pastor sounds a little jaded, unfortunately, more often, this statement is true rather than untrue. There have been many, many Christians who leave the church hurt, misunderstood, angry, and frustrated. Church splits, disunity, and skepticism of church leadership are just symptoms of a greater problem...the inability to solve a conflict.

Another pastor once told me, “If it wasn’t for people I would really enjoy the church”. The problem is that there are people in the church and we need to learn to get along. What a terrible testimony when the church looks just like the world. Anger, infighting, protests, and threats are the way the world deals with conflict. We live in a cancel culture. If you disagree with me, I will destroy your reputation, your standing in culture, and your livelihood. That is not the way the church should handle conflict. Sometimes, conflict is created over small things like differing opinions or personal tastes. Here, Jesus is dealing with something much more severe, when a person sins against you. This is more than just a personality difference. This is when someone wrongs you in the church. Jesus believes that church leadership should be in the right step with God and that issues of conflict should be brought to that leadership. Jesus dealt with leadership that was not listening to God, but didn’t change His opinion about what we should do and how resolution should work. We see Jesus showing a progression of escalation, not in the conflict, but in the resolution. The goal in conflict is always resolution, which should impact the way you deal with conflict.

IV. **Community that Learns:**

- A. Review the points of the Pastor’s message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?
- B. Sermon outline: Better Together – Conflict (Matthew 18:15-20)
- C. 3 important points to consider about conflict:
  - 1. Steps in dealing with (\_\_\_\_\_). Matthew 18:15-17
  
  - 2. The (\_\_\_\_\_) is the final authority for conflicts between followers of Christ. Matthew 18:18; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8
  
  - 3. Unity of the heart makes the church (\_\_\_\_\_). Matthew 18:19-20

V. **Community that Applies:**

- A. What has been your experience with conflict outside the church?
  
- B. Did you feel it was fair or unfair with the way it was handled?
  
- C. Was the conflict ever resolved?
  
- D. What has been your experience with conflict inside the church?
  
- E. Do you feel it was fair or unfair with the way it was handled?
  
- F. Was the conflict ever resolved?

G. Why did Jesus instruct people to go to the church with their conflict when He knew that they were not right with God?

H. How would you feel about coming to the elders of LifeWater with your conflict?

VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about conflict?

VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes praying about your next step.

VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

A. The scripture next week is Hebrews 10:23-25.

B. If you missed Sunday’s sermon, watch online at [www.lifewatercc.org](http://www.lifewatercc.org) before the next Life Group.

C. Reflect on next week’s questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

## “Better Together: Motivating Each Other”

Hebrews 10:23-25

### I. **Purpose:**

- A. To help us understand how to deal with discouraged, distraught, and demotivated followers of Jesus.
- B. To help us know how to appropriately “spur others on”.
- C. To help us see we all need to be taking our next step.

### II. **Community that Cares:**

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

### III. **Community that Understands the Background:**

One of the true tragedies of the pandemic has been a sense of loneliness. With restrictions, encouragement to stay home, and, wearing masks, we have developed this separation from others that have been destructive. It has definitely impacted the community in our cities, neighborhoods, and even our families. We have become used to being isolated and relying on ourselves. Asking for help, accepting correction, and becoming others focused have become foreign concepts.

The early church didn't look anything like the way we look today. The church lived in community which means that people were open to having people breathe into their lives. They were used to looking to other people's needs ahead of their own. They were used to coming together and if there was a need, they would meet that need. They were also used to people challenging them in love: saying the hard thing; holding people accountable; cheerleading each other on to good choices; and encouraging each other to not give up. What a different picture than today.

I think people are craving a community like that today. People are tired of being alone. They are tired of living in fear. They are tired of not having hope for the future. People want someone who will care for them. People want to care for others. We desperately need each other. When the road is hard in life we need someone saying, “Keep pushing on”. I hope that LWCC will become a community like the early church, more than the way our culture is today. My prayer is that you will help make that possible.

IV. **Community that Learns:**

- A. Review the points of the Pastor’s message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?
- B. Sermon outline: Better Together – Motivating each other (Hebrews 10:23-25)
- C. 3 important points to consider about motivation to not give up on relationships:
  - 1. Hold on to (\_\_\_\_\_). Hebrews 10:23
  
  - 2. Spur each on to (\_\_\_\_\_) relationships. Hebrews 10:24
  
  - 3. Keep worshipping our (\_\_\_\_\_) God together. Hebrews 10:25

V. **Community that Applies:**

- A. What is your experience with community? Good or bad?
  
- B. What is one word that you would use to describe the early church’s community?
  
- C. Is it hard to replicate that today? Why or why not?
  
- D. How did the early church accomplish unity when it had so much diversity in it?
  
- E. Why was meeting together so important for the early church?
  
- F. Is it equally important today? Why or why not?

VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about motivating each other?

VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes praying about your next step.

VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

A. The scripture next week is Galatians 6:1.

B. If you missed Sunday’s sermon, watch online at [www.lifewatercc.org](http://www.lifewatercc.org) before the next Life Group.

C. Reflect on next week’s questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

## **“Better Together: Restoration”**

Galatians 6:1

### **I. Purpose:**

- A. To help us understand how to deal with a brother/sister who has fallen into sin.
- B. To help us know the steps to take to restore our brother or sister.
- C. To help us see that restoration is possible.

### **II. Community that Cares:**

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

### **III. Community that Understands the Background:**

Earlier in this series, we discussed “conflict” when a brother or sister sins against you. Paul brings up a different type of situation where--a brother or sister is caught in a sin. The word “caught” is an interesting word. It has the idea of being surprised or overtaken by a particular sin. It is not a deliberate sinner, but one who made a mistake and that decision led them down a road of sin. This is a person who is trapped in a place they thought they would never be.

The thought that Paul is instructing, is how to deal with a person who has fallen into sin. It was not planned; it was not deliberate; it was more of an unwitting experience. Even in this situation, the person has still sinned. No excuses. They have missed the mark. They should have known better, but they put themselves into a bad situation. They are not to be ignored or excused. Equally, they should not be destroyed or rejected!!

The goal is restoration. Restoration from the Greek means “To put back together” or “restore to its former condition”. Paul says in order to restore this follower of Christ, there needs to be those who are spiritually mature; men and women who are led by the Holy Spirit and have the knowledge and wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 2:15). The restoration needs to be done gently. The spirit of gentleness comes from the knowledge that we have weaknesses and are fallible. No one is perfect and we need to remember “but by the grace of God go I”. May we never be like the person who used this phrase to describe Christianity, “The Christian army is the most dysfunctional army ever because they kill their wounded.”

IV. **Community that Learns:**

- A. Review the points of the Pastor’s message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?
- B. Sermon outline: Better Together – Restoration (Galatians 6:1)
- C. 3 important points to consider about restoring a fallen follower:
  1. A believer who is caught in a sin is the (\_\_\_\_\_). Galatians 6:1
  
  2. Spiritually mature followers of Christ restore the (\_\_\_\_\_) gently. Galatians 6:1
  
  3. Watch out that the mature follower of Christ does not (\_\_\_\_\_). Galatians 6:1

V. **Community that Applies:**

- A. Have you ever seen someone restored at the churches you have attended? Describe the process.
  
- B. What does restoration look like to you?
  
- C. Is it wrong for Christian brothers and sisters to ignore someone who is caught in sin? Why or why not?
  
- D. Is it wrong for Christian brothers and sisters to reject someone who is caught in sin? Why or Why not?
  
- E. Why is gentleness so important in the restoration process?



F. What are some of the temptations that spiritual brothers and sisters might face?

VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about restoration?

VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes praying about your next step.

VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

A. The scripture next week is Romans 8:1-13.

B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at [www.lifewatercc.org](http://www.lifewatercc.org) before the next Life Group.

C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

## “Better Together: The weaker brother/sister”

Romans 14:1-22

### I. Purpose:

- A. To help us understand who is a weaker brother/sister.
- B. To help us know how love should impact this relationship.
- C. To help us see what the mature Christian’s response should be to the weaker brother/sister.

### II. Community that Cares:

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

### III. Community that Understands the Background:

Freedom is an amazing thing, especially in faith. Paul writes and preaches about the freedom we have in Christ. Unfortunately, some in the early church were trying to use their personal experiences and convictions to force others to have those same convictions with debatable topics. Paul describes these Christians as weaker Christians.

Paul has some insightful words to say to people who try to do this. He says to accept those whose faith is weak. This shows that there is room in the church for those who have weak faith. Why were some Christians weak? Maybe there were brand new baby Christians, or they were sick because of their legalistic attitudes, or maybe they were starving from the lack of good teaching, or maybe they were not obeying and putting into practice what they were learning. They were “fat” Christians who needed to exercise their spiritual legs. Whatever the reason, Paul calls these Christians “weak”.

Eating meat offered to idols was a big “hot button” for weak Christians in the early church. There were those who said it didn’t matter if you ate meat offered to idols because the meat was a creation of God and sanctified by God. Others said it was sinful to eat something and put it in your body that was offered to an idol. Paul says to accept both views, do so to the Lord, and don’t judge each other. Paul says the key point here is not the meat but the stumbling block that could be created. Paul instructs mature Christians to yield their rights for the sake of their brother/sister’s spiritual growth.

IV. **Community that Learns:**

- A. Review the points of the Pastor’s message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?
- B. Sermon outline: Better Together the Weaker Brother/Sister (Romans 8:1-13)
- C. 3 Important points to consider about dealing with a weaker follower of Jesus:
  - 1. Love is more (\_\_\_\_\_) than knowledge. Romans 14:1-3
  
  - 2. The (\_\_\_\_\_) that was causing the problems. Romans 14:4-8
  
  - 3. Yielding our freedom to (\_\_\_\_\_) in the weaker follower. Romans 14:9-22

V. **Community that Applies:**

- A. Describe how you would define a weaker brother/sister?
  
- B. What would you consider to be the things that Christians do today that could be a stumbling block for weaker Christians? (Disputable matters)
  
- C. What is the difference between judging someone as described by Paul here and judging someone’s fruit?
  
- D. Why was it so hard to accept someone else’s conviction that disagreed with your conviction?
  
- E. What benefit was there for the mature Christian to yield their view to the weaker brother/sister?

F. What do you think are the responsibilities for the weaker brother/sister?

VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about the weaker brother/sister?

VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes praying about your next step.

VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

A. The scriptures next week are Mathew 26:14-16, 47-56; 27:3-10.

B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at [www.lifewatercc.org](http://www.lifewatercc.org) before the next Life Group.

C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

## Fill in the Blanks

### Lesson 1

1. Never
2. Neighbor
3. Needs

### Lesson 2

1. Church
2. Christian
3. Commandment

### Lesson 3

1. Conflict
2. Church
3. Complete

### Lesson 4

1. Hope
2. Healthy
3. Holy

### Lesson 5

1. Situation
2. Sinner
3. Stumble

### Lesson 6

1. Important
2. Issue
3. Invest















**LIFEWATER**  
COMMUNITY CHURCH