

MARK 12:31

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

A Bible Study on Unity,
Compassion, and Loving Across Divides

Mark 12:31

"The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

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Introduction: A Divided World

We live in an age of unprecedented division. Political polarization has reached levels not seen in generations. Families split over elections. Friendships dissolve over policy disagreements. Social media algorithms feed us only the views we already hold, reinforcing our certainty that "they"—whoever "they" are—are not just wrong, but dangerous.

Left versus right. Conservative versus liberal. Red versus blue. The battle lines seem fixed, the rhetoric increasingly hostile, the possibility of genuine dialogue increasingly remote.

And the Church, which should be a beacon of unity, often mirrors these same divisions. We sort ourselves into politically homogeneous congregations, barely speaking to—let alone loving—those Christians who vote differently than we do.

Into this fractured landscape, the words of Jesus cut with uncomfortable clarity:

Mark 12:31

"Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these."

Notice what Jesus does not say. He does not say, "Love your neighbor who agrees with you." He does not say, "Love your neighbor who votes like you." He does not say, "Love your neighbor unless they're on the other side."

Just: Love your neighbor.

This study is designed for a divided age. It is for Christians who want to take Jesus seriously—even when it's hard. It is for those who suspect that the current level of animosity is incompatible with following Christ. It is for anyone who has wondered: Is it possible to hold firm convictions and still love those who disagree?

The answer, according to Scripture, is not only possible—it is required.

How to Use This Study

This curriculum works for individual study or small groups. Each module takes one to two hours.

For Individual Study

1. Begin each session with prayer
2. Read through the teaching content slowly
3. Write out your answers to the reflection questions
4. Memorize the Scripture for each module
5. Use the Daily Devotional Guide throughout the week

For Small Groups

This study can bring together people across the political spectrum. Consider these guidelines:

- Establish a covenant of respect at the first meeting
- Focus on Scripture, not on debating political positions
- Listen to understand, not to respond
- Assume the best intentions in others
- Remember: the goal is not agreement on policy but love across difference

Facilitator Guidelines

If you are leading a group, pay special attention to these guidelines:

Create Safety

- Establish that this is not a space for political debate
- Set ground rules about respectful disagreement
- Model curiosity rather than certainty

Redirect Political Arguments

If discussion veers into partisan territory, gently redirect:

- *"How does this Scripture apply to how we treat each other?"*
- *"What would loving our neighbor look like in this situation?"*
- *"How can we apply this to someone who sees things differently?"*

Model the Way

- Share your own struggles with loving across divides
- Avoid signaling your own political positions
- Demonstrate a charitable interpretation of opposing views

Module 1: Who Is My Neighbor?

Expanding the Circle

Luke 10:29

"But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'"

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, when You were asked about the greatest commandment, You answered with love. When You were asked to define neighbor, You pointed to our enemies. Today, challenge my assumptions about who deserves my love. Expand my circle beyond those who look, think, and vote like me. Give me eyes to see neighbors where I have seen only opponents. Amen.

The Question Behind the Question

When an expert in the law asked Jesus to identify the greatest commandment, Jesus answered: love God completely, love your neighbor as yourself. The lawyer wasn't satisfied. He asked a follow-up question that reveals our universal temptation: "Who is my neighbor?"

The real question wasn't seeking information—it was seeking limitation. "Who is my neighbor?" really means: "Who is NOT my neighbor? Who can I exclude from the obligation to love?"

We ask the same question today. We look for boundaries, exceptions, loopholes:

- *"Surely I don't have to love people who believe THAT?"*
- *"They're not really my neighbor if they vote for THAT party."*
- *"These people are destroying the country—how can I love them?"*
- *"They started it. I don't owe them anything."*

Jesus anticipated our attempts to narrow the circle. His answer was the parable of the Good Samaritan.

The Scandal of the Samaritan

We've sanitized this story through familiarity. But to Jesus' original audience, it was shocking—even offensive.

Jews and Samaritans were enemies. The division was religious, ethnic, and political. They disagreed about where God should be worshipped, which scriptures were valid, and their entire history. They avoided each other's territories. They wouldn't share a cup of water with each other.

In modern terms, imagine Jesus telling a story where the hero is someone from the political party you despise most. Not just someone who votes differently—someone whose views you find genuinely dangerous. That's how shocking this parable was.

And Jesus makes this enemy the hero. The priest walks by. The Levite walks by. The religious professionals—the people who should know better—fail to love. But the despised outsider? He stops. He helps. He pays.

Then Jesus asks: "Which of these three was a neighbor?"

The lawyer can't even bring himself to say "the Samaritan." He answers: "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus says, "Go and do likewise."

Your Samaritans

Who are your Samaritans? Not people who mildly annoy you—people you genuinely struggle to respect. People whose views feel not just wrong but harmful. People you cannot imagine loving.

The parable doesn't ask whether your assessment of them is correct. It doesn't validate their positions or excuse bad behavior. It simply demands: love them anyway.

This is the scandal of the gospel. This is the offense of the cross. Jesus died for His enemies—including us. And He calls us to love ours.

Reflection Questions

1. Who are the people you most struggle to see as neighbors? Be specific.
2. What assumptions do you make about people on the "other side" politically?
3. Have you ever been surprised by kindness from someone you expected to be hostile? What happened?
4. What would it look like to be a "Good Samaritan" to someone whose views you oppose?

Closing Prayer

Lord, I confess that I have drawn circles to exclude people from my love. I have looked for loopholes in Your commandment. Today, I hear Your call to expand the circle—to include even those I consider enemies. Give me the courage to be a Good Samaritan across the divides of our time. Help me see every person as a neighbor You command me to love. Amen.

Scripture Memory

Luke 10:36-37

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Module 2: One Body, Many Parts

The Gift of Difference

1 Corinthians 12:12

"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ."

Opening Prayer

Father, You have designed Your Church with beautiful diversity—different gifts, perspectives, and callings. Yet we have turned diversity into division, treating difference as a threat rather than a gift. Teach me to value what others bring, even when it challenges me. Show me how the Body of Christ needs all its parts to function. Unite what we have torn apart. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The Design of Diversity

The human body is an engineering marvel of interdependence. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head cannot say to the feet, "You're not important." Every part, no matter how seemingly insignificant, plays a vital role.

Paul uses this image to describe the Church—and by extension, the human community. We are designed for diversity. Different people have different gifts, perspectives, and roles. This is not a problem to be solved but a feature to be celebrated.

Yet our natural tendency is toward homogeneity. We gravitate toward people who see the world the way we do. Social media accelerates this: algorithms show us only views we already hold, creating echo chambers where our assumptions go unchallenged and our blind spots remain invisible.

Politically, we have sorted ourselves into bubbles. Many Americans cannot name a single close friend who votes for the other party. We have lost the ability to be sharpened, corrected, or enriched by different perspectives.

The Eye Cannot Say to the Hand...

1 Corinthians 12:21-22

"The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable."

Consider what people with different political perspectives might offer:

Those who emphasize tradition and stability help preserve what is good and prevent reckless change. Those who emphasize progress and reform help us grow and address injustice. Those focused on individual liberty protect against tyranny. Those focused on collective responsibility ensure no one is left behind.

When we dismiss everyone on "the other side" as foolish or evil, we lose the gifts they bring. We become a body trying to function with missing parts.

This doesn't mean every political position is equally valid or that we abandon our convictions. It means recognizing that people who see things differently may see something we're missing.

"If One Part Suffers..."

1 Corinthians 12:26

"If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it."

The body metaphor includes shared suffering. When Christians demonize other Christians over politics, the whole Body of Christ is wounded. When we cannot worship together, serve together, or even speak civilly together because of political differences, something is deeply wrong.

Political convictions matter. Some issues involve genuine moral stakes. But have we reached a point where our political identity matters more to us than our identity in Christ?

The early church included Roman soldiers and Jewish zealots who wanted Rome destroyed. It included wealthy merchants and slaves. It included people from opposite ends of every social and political spectrum. Yet Paul insisted: "You are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

What held them together was not political agreement. It was the cross.

Reflection Questions

1. What perspectives do you hear only from people you disagree with? What might those perspectives offer?
2. How has political sorting affected your relationships—inside or outside the church?
3. Think of someone with different political views. What gifts or insights might they bring that you lack?
4. What would it look like for your church to embody unity across political differences?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, You prayed that Your followers would be one, as You and the Father are one. Forgive us for the ways we have divided Your Body. Help us see difference as a gift rather than a threat. Teach us to value what others bring, even when it's uncomfortable. Unite us not around shared politics, but around Your cross. Amen.

Scripture Memory

1 Corinthians 12:25-26

"...so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it."

Module 3: Neither Left Nor Right

Identity Beyond Division

Galatians 3:28

"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Opening Prayer

Father, the world offers us identities that divide—labels that separate us from one another and from You. Today, remind me that my deepest identity is found in Christ alone. Help me hold my political convictions loosely enough that they do not define me more than my faith does. Teach me to see brothers and sisters where I have seen opponents. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The Great Equalizer

The divisions Paul mentions in Galatians 3:28 were not minor. Jew and Gentile represented the most fundamental religious and ethnic divide of the ancient world. Slaves and free men represented an economic and social chasm that touched every aspect of life. Males and females represented distinct roles and statuses in society.

Yet Paul declares: in Christ, these divisions no longer define us. Not that they disappear—people remained ethnically Jewish or Gentile, remained enslaved or free, remained male or female. But these identities no longer had the power to separate.

If the gospel could bridge those divides, surely it can bridge ours.

In our context, the relevant verse might read: "There is neither Republican nor Democrat, neither liberal nor conservative, neither urban nor rural, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

When Politics Becomes Identity

Something has shifted in our culture. Political affiliation has become not just a set of positions but a comprehensive identity—a way of understanding ourselves and our place in the world.

Signs that politics may have become identity:

- You cannot imagine being friends with someone who votes differently
- Learning someone's politics changes how you see everything about them
- You feel personally attacked when your party or positions are criticized
- Your political views determine which news you trust, which facts you accept
- You spend more time consuming political content than Scripture or prayer

When politics becomes identity, losing an election feels like an existential threat. Disagreement becomes personal betrayal. Every issue becomes ultimate. Every conversation becomes a battlefield.

This is a form of idolatry—allowing something other than Christ to define who we are.

Primary Identity: Citizen of Heaven

Philippians 3:20

"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Before you are a Republican or Democrat, you are a citizen of heaven. Before you are conservative or liberal, you are a child of God. Before you are any political label, you are in Christ.

This does not mean politics don't matter. Christians should engage the public square, advocate for justice, and vote their convictions. But these activities flow from our primary identity—they do not create it.

When identity is secure in Christ, we can hold political positions without clutching them desperately. We can lose elections without losing ourselves. We can disagree with fellow Christians without questioning their salvation.

We are free from the tyranny of making politics ultimate.

Reflection Questions

1. How would you describe your political identity? How strongly do you hold it?
2. Have you ever let someone's politics determine how you viewed them as a person? What happened?
3. What would change if your primary identity truly were 'citizen of heaven' rather than any political label?
4. How might your political engagement look different if it flowed from your identity in Christ rather than defining it?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, I confess that I have sometimes let politics define me more than You do. I have made ideology identity and treated party affiliation as tribal belonging. Today, I reclaim my true identity: I am Yours. I belong to the kingdom of heaven. Help me engage politically from this security, not for it. May I be known first as Your follower, not as any political label. Amen.

Scripture Memory

Colossians 3:11

"Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all."

Module 4: Blessed Are the Peacemakers

The Active Work of Peace

Matthew 5:9

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

Opening Prayer

Father, You are the God of peace, and You have called us to be peacemakers in a world of conflict. Forgive me for the times I have added to division rather than working for reconciliation. Give me wisdom to know when to speak and when to stay silent, when to engage and when to step back. Make me an instrument of Your peace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Peace Is Not Passivity

Notice the language: peaceMAKERS, not peacekeepers. Jesus is not describing passive avoidance of conflict. He is calling for active work to create peace where it doesn't exist.

This is harder than it sounds. Our instinct in the face of conflict is usually one of two extremes:

- Fight: Engage aggressively, determined to win at any cost
- Flight: Avoid the conflict entirely, pretend it doesn't exist

Peacemaking is neither. It requires engaging conflict redemptively—working toward genuine resolution rather than superficial peace or total victory.

In our politically divided moment, peacemaking might look like:

- Having difficult conversations rather than cutting people off
- Seeking to understand before seeking to be understood
- Refusing to demonize opponents even when you strongly disagree
- Modeling civil discourse in uncivil times
- Prioritizing relationships over winning arguments

"As Far As It Depends on You..."

Romans 12:18

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

Paul acknowledges reality: sometimes peace is not possible. You cannot control others. Some people will reject reconciliation no matter what you do.

But notice the phrase "as far as it depends on you." The question is not whether others are willing to make peace. The question is whether YOU are doing your part.

Ask yourself:

- Have I reached out, or am I waiting for them to make the first move?
- Have I spoken with humility, acknowledging I might be wrong about some things?
- Have I actually listened to understand their perspective?
- Have I extended the same grace I want for myself?
- If they refuse peace, can I honestly say I did everything I could?

Children of God

The reward for peacemakers is striking: "they will be called children of God." Why this particular blessing?

Because peacemaking is what God does. In Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19). Jesus came to make peace between God and humanity, between hostile groups, between enemies.

When we make peace, we do what our Father does. We look like His children. We reveal His character to the world.

In a culture addicted to outrage, peacemakers stand out. They are unusual. They are counter-cultural. They are recognizably different.

They look like Jesus.

Reflection Questions

1. Do you tend toward "fight" or "flight" when facing political disagreement?
2. What would active peacemaking look like in your most strained relationship?
3. Is there a relationship you have given up on that God might be calling you to pursue?
4. What would it cost you to be a peacemaker in your current context?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, You are the Prince of Peace who reconciled us to God at infinite cost to Yourself. Make me like You. Give me the courage to pursue peace when it would be easier to fight or flee. Help me do everything that depends on me, and trust You with the rest. May my commitment to peace mark me as Your child. Amen.

Scripture Memory

Romans 12:18

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

Module 5: Speaking Truth in Love

The Art of Disagreement

Ephesians 4:15

"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ."

Opening Prayer

Father, You are the God of truth and the God of love. Help me hold these together when speaking to those who disagree with me. Guard me from sacrificing truth for false peace, but also from using truth as a weapon. Teach me the art of speaking truth in love, that my words might build up rather than tear down. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Truth Without Love, Love Without Truth

We often err in one of two directions:

TRUTH WITHOUT LOVE is harsh, self-righteous, and destructive. It uses truth as a weapon rather than a gift. It may be factually correct, but relationally devastating. It prioritizes being right over being loving.

LOVE WITHOUT TRUTH is sentimental, weak, and ultimately dishonest. It avoids conflict at any cost. It enables harmful behavior in the name of niceness. It prioritizes temporary peace over genuine growth.

Both are failures. Christians are called to hold truth AND love together—not choosing one over the other but embodying both simultaneously.

How to Disagree Well

Disagreement is inevitable. Destructive disagreement is not. Here are principles for disagreeing in a way that honors Christ:

1. ASSUME GOOD FAITH

Before you engage, assume the other person has reasons for their position—reasons that make sense to them, even if you disagree. Avoid attributing their views to stupidity, evil, or bad motives. This is basic charity.

2. SEEK TO UNDERSTAND FIRST

Ask questions before making arguments. Try to articulate their position so well that they say, "Yes, that's exactly what I believe." Only then should you offer your disagreement.

3. ACKNOWLEDGE WHAT'S TRUE

Almost every position, even ones you strongly disagree with, contains some grain of truth or legitimate concern. Acknowledge it. This shows you're actually listening and builds trust.

4. BE SPECIFIC, NOT SWEEPING

Avoid generalizations about "liberals" or "conservatives." Address specific ideas, policies, or arguments. This prevents strawmanning and keeps the conversation grounded.

5. STAY HUMBLE

You might be wrong about some things. You definitely don't have complete information. Hold your positions with appropriate humility—not weak-minded capitulation, but honest acknowledgment of your limitations.

6. PRIORITIZE RELATIONSHIP

Ask yourself: Is winning this argument worth damaging this relationship? Sometimes the answer is yes—some things must be said even at relational cost. But often, we sacrifice relationships for arguments that ultimately don't matter that much.

"Let Your Conversation Be Always Full of Grace"

Colossians 4:6

"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

Grace-filled speech doesn't mean weak speech. Salt has flavor—it adds something, it even stings in a wound. But it also preserves and enhances.

What if our political conversations were known for grace? What if Christians were recognized not for loudness or anger, but for speaking hard truths with genuine love?

This would be remarkable. It would stand out. It might even change some minds—something harsh rhetoric seldom does.

Reflection Questions

1. Which way do you tend to err: truth without love, or love without truth?
2. Think of a recent political disagreement. Did you assume good faith in the other person?
3. What is one change you could make to how you engage in political conversations?
4. Is there someone you need to apologize to for speaking truth without love?

Closing Prayer

Lord, I confess that my speech has not always been full of grace. I have used truth as a weapon. I have avoided the truth to keep false peace. Teach me to hold truth and love together as You do. May my words build up rather than tear down. May I be known for speaking hard truths with genuine kindness. Amen.

Scripture Memory

Ephesians 4:15

"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ."

Module 6: Overcoming Evil with Good

The Counter-Cultural Response

Romans 12:21

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Opening Prayer

Father, everything in my nature wants to repay evil with evil, hostility with hostility, contempt with contempt. But You call me to a different way—the way of Jesus, who blessed those who cursed Him and prayed for those who crucified Him. Transform my heart. Help me respond to hatred with love, to evil with good. Make me more like Your Son. Amen.

The Way of the World

The world operates on reciprocity: you hit me, I hit back harder. You insult me, I insult you worse. You hurt me, I'll make sure you pay.

This pattern is everywhere in our political culture. Opponents are not just wrong—they are monsters. Disagreement justifies hatred. If they attack us, we have every right to attack them.

The result is an ever-escalating spiral of contempt. Each side justifies its behavior by pointing to the other side's behavior. The cycle never ends because no one is willing to break it.

Into this pattern, Scripture speaks a radical alternative:

Romans 12:17-19

"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord."

The Way of Jesus

This is not weakness or passivity. It is the way of Jesus—who, when reviled, did not revile in return. Who forgave those who crucified Him. Who loved His enemies unto death.

This is the way that actually changes things. Violence begets violence. Contempt breeds contempt. But love, unexpectedly offered to those who don't deserve it? That's the power that transformed the Roman Empire without a single military victory.

Paul continues with one of Scripture's most radical commands:

Romans 12:20

"On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.'"

The "burning coals" image refers not to punishment but to the burning shame that comes from unexpected kindness. When you respond to hostility with love, you disarm your enemy. You break the cycle. You create the possibility of transformation.

Practical Good for Political "Enemies"

What might overcoming evil with good look like in our polarized moment?

- Pray genuinely for political figures you oppose—not that they would fail, but that they would be blessed and led toward wisdom
- Speak well of people on the other side when given the opportunity—acknowledge their good intentions even when disagreeing with their conclusions
- Serve alongside people with different politics—shared work builds relationships across divides
- Refuse to share content that dehumanizes opponents, even if you find it funny or satisfying
- Build genuine friendships across political lines—not to convert them, but to love them
- When you're attacked for your views, respond with grace rather than counter-attack

Do Not Be Overcome

Notice the warning: "Do not be OVERCOME by evil." The danger is not just that we might do evil, but that evil might overcome us—that we become shaped by the hostility we're fighting against.

When we respond to contempt with contempt, evil wins. When we fight hatred with hatred, evil wins. Even if we "win" the argument, we lose ourselves.

The only way to truly win is to break the cycle—to overcome evil with good.

This is impossibly hard. It requires supernatural power. It requires the Spirit of Jesus living in us and working through us.

But it is the way of the Kingdom. It is the way that actually transforms enemies into friends, darkness into light, death into life. It is the way of Jesus.

Reflection Questions

1. In what ways have you been "overcome" by evil—shaped by the hostility you're fighting against?
2. What would it look like to do good to a political "enemy" this week?
3. Is there someone you need to stop viewing as an enemy and start viewing as someone God loves?
4. What would change in our culture if Christians consistently overcame evil with good?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, You showed us the way to overcome evil—not with more evil, but with sacrificial love. Forgive me for the times I have returned evil for evil, contempt for contempt. Give me Your heart for my enemies. Help me see them as You see them—people You love and died for. Transform my responses from natural retaliation to supernatural love. Overcome the evil in me with Your good. Amen.

Scripture Memory

Romans 12:21

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Appendix A: Scripture Memory Cards

Cut these cards out or copy them to index cards for daily review:

Module 1 — Luke 10:36-37

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Module 2 — 1 Corinthians 12:25-26

"...so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it."

Module 3 — Colossians 3:11

"Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all."

Module 4 — Romans 12:18

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

Module 5 — Ephesians 4:15

"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ."

Module 6 — Romans 12:21

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Appendix B: Six-Week Daily Devotional Guide

Use this guide throughout the study to reinforce each module's theme.

Week 1: Who Is My Neighbor?

Day 1: Read Luke 10:25-29. Notice the lawyer's desire to limit love.

Day 2: Read Luke 10:30-35. The despised Samaritan is the hero.

Day 3: Read Luke 10:36-37. Go and do likewise.

Day 4: Read Matthew 5:43-48. Love your enemies.

Day 5: Read Luke 6:27-36. Bless those who curse you.

Day 6: Read 1 John 4:20-21. Loving God requires loving others.

Day 7: Rest. Pray for someone you consider an "enemy."

Daily Affirmation: "Everyone is my neighbor. There are no exceptions to love."

Week 2: One Body, Many Parts

Day 1: Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-14. One body, many parts.

Day 2: Read 1 Corinthians 12:15-20. Every part is needed.

Day 3: Read 1 Corinthians 12:21-26. No part can say "I don't need you."

Day 4: Read Romans 12:3-8. Different gifts, one body.

Day 5: Read Ephesians 4:1-6. Unity in diversity.

Day 6: Read Psalm 133. How good when brothers dwell together.

Day 7: Rest. Reach out to someone with different views.

Daily Affirmation: "I need perspectives different from my own. We are one body."

Week 3: Neither Left Nor Right

Day 1: Read Galatians 3:26-29. All one in Christ.

Day 2: Read Colossians 3:9-11. The new self transcends categories.

Day 3: Read Philippians 3:17-21. Citizenship in heaven.

Day 4: Read 1 Peter 2:9-12. A chosen people, foreigners here.

Day 5: Read John 17:20-23. Jesus' prayer for unity.

Day 6: Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. New creation, ambassadors.

Day 7: Rest. Examine: Is my identity more in Christ or politics?

Daily Affirmation: "I am a citizen of heaven before any earthly allegiance."

Week 4: Blessed Are the Peacemakers

Day 1: Read Matthew 5:9. Peacemakers are called children of God.

Day 2: Read Romans 12:17-18. Live at peace with everyone.

Day 3: Read Hebrews 12:14-15. Pursue peace.

Day 4: Read James 3:17-18. Wisdom from above is peace-loving.

Day 5: Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-20. Ministry of reconciliation.

Day 6: Read Isaiah 52:7. Beautiful feet of those bringing peace.

Day 7: Rest. Take one concrete step toward reconciliation.

Daily Affirmation: "I am called to make peace, not just keep it."

Week 5: Speaking Truth in Love

Day 1: Read Ephesians 4:15-16. Truth and love together.

Day 2: Read Ephesians 4:25-29. Put off falsehood, speak helpfully.

Day 3: Read Colossians 4:5-6. Speech full of grace.

Day 4: Read James 1:19-20. Quick to listen, slow to speak.

Day 5: Read Proverbs 15:1-4. Gentle answers turn away wrath.

Day 6: Read James 3:1-12. The power of the tongue.

Day 7: Rest. Practice speaking difficult truth with kindness.

Daily Affirmation: "I will speak truth and love together, never one without the other."

Week 6: Overcoming Evil with Good

Day 1: Read Romans 12:17-21. Overcome evil with good.

Day 2: Read 1 Peter 3:8-12. Do not repay evil with evil.

Day 3: Read 1 Peter 2:21-23. Jesus did not retaliate.

Day 4: Read Matthew 5:38-42. Turn the other cheek.

Day 5: Read Luke 23:32-34. Father, forgive them.

Day 6: Read Acts 7:59-60. Stephen forgives his killers.

Day 7: Rest. Identify one evil you can overcome with good this week.

Daily Affirmation: "I will not be overcome by evil. I will overcome evil with good."

Appendix C: Group Covenant

For groups studying across political differences, consider adopting this covenant:

OUR COVENANT FOR UNITY

We, the members of this study group, covenant together:

1. To LISTEN before we speak, seeking to understand rather than to win.
2. To ASSUME GOOD FAITH in those who disagree with us.
3. To SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE, holding both together.
4. To ACKNOWLEDGE OUR OWN LIMITATIONS and the possibility we might be wrong.
5. To PRIORITIZE RELATIONSHIP over winning arguments.
6. To KEEP CONFIDENCE what is shared in this group.
7. To PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER, including those we disagree with.
8. To LET SCRIPTURE challenge all of us, regardless of political leaning.
9. To FOCUS ON JESUS as our common foundation and ultimate authority.
10. To BE THE CHURCH that bridges divides rather than deepening them.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

*"Love your neighbor as yourself."
"There is no commandment greater than these."
— Mark 12:31*

May we be known not by our politics,
but by our love.

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