



MON 1-3

- ✓ SCRIPTURE 1 Peter 3:8
- ✓ THOUGHT Unity requires humility. "Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble." [NIV] Unity in a family, church, or workplace requires each person involved to demonstrate humility and respect toward the group. Think of the different communities you are a part of and pray about your role in protecting unity in those contexts.
- ✓ PRAYER God, show me areas of my life where I have allowed myself to put my own interests above others. Help me to lead the way when it comes to being humble in the way I treat the people I live with, work with, and worship with. Amen.

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TUES 1-4

- ✓ SCRIPTURE John 13:35
- ✓ THOUGHT Love is the evidence. "This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other." [CEB] Unity is a signal to others that love is present. When we love each other, we find space for tolerance of disagreements. This type of love attracts those who are looking for a place to belong.
- ✓ PRAYER God, when I begin to get irritated or defensive because of a disagreement, help me take a step back and remember that love is the most important thing. Help me to be humble enough to leave room for others' thoughts and ideas and to be willing to include people who think differently than I do. Amen.

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WED 1-5

- ✓ SCRIPTURE Philippians 2:8
- ✓ THOUGHT Jesus showed us what humble looks like! "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!" [NIV] Jesus demonstrated ultimate humility for the sake of bringing us together with God. When we consider the lengths to which he was willing to go, we can be inspired to lay our own self-interests aside for the sake of unity.
- ✓ PRAYER Loving God, sometimes I struggle to want things my way at the expense of others. Help me to keep in mind the way that Christ lived and the extreme example of love and selflessness that he has shown me. Amen.

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THURS 1-6

- ✓ SCRIPTURE Romans 12:10
- ✓ THOUGHT Honor others! "Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other." [NLT] Take a moment to think of a specific person you could honor in some small way today. Who could use a note, phone call, recognition, or even a simple "thank you"? When we honor someone, we become *for* that person. This is unity-building!
- ✓ PRAYER God, bring to mind someone who might need to feel my appreciation today. Help me to always be on the lookout for ways I can build up the people in my life and truly appreciate who they are. Amen.

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FRI 1-7

- ✓ SCRIPTURE Titus 3:2
- ✓ THOUGHT Show courtesy. "They shouldn't speak disrespectfully about anyone, but they should be peaceful, kind, and show complete courtesy toward everyone." [CEB] Sometimes, when we are passionate about something, our manners are lost! Part of humility is always taking care in the way that you speak to others--trying not to interrupt and listening with the purpose of understanding.
- ✓ PRAYER God, sometimes I forget that the way I treat others is more important than the opinions I have to share. Please keep reminding me, help me to listen to your guiding voice so that I can put my own interests behind kindness, courtesy, and peace. Amen.

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SAT 1-8

- ✓ SCRIPTURE Romans 12:18
- ✓ THOUGHT It depends on you. "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." [NIV] To the extent possible, we are to make choices that lead to peace. Sometimes it is out of our control, but our words and actions are under our control, and when we humbly draw near to God, we will find the strength to make choices that bring people together.
- ✓ PRAYER Loving God, I want to take responsibility for creating peace in my relationships. Remind me to make more space in my day to be with you so that I can remember your ways and listen for your guidance. Amen.

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GROUP GUIDE

- ✓ **PRAYER** God, we acknowledge that you are already here. May our hearts be open to your presence and direction. Amen.
- ✓ **BIG IDEA** During this series, we could easily spend small group time debating the hot topics; however, since our goal is to build unity, the group discussion guides are centered around that concept. Humility is required to experience unity as a church. Unity is opposed by pride and self-interest. We don't have to agree, but to remain unified, we have to leave space for the ideas of others to exist alongside our own.
- ✓ **DISCUSS**
 - Think of a time when a disagreement about a controversial topic negatively impacted one of your relationships. As you look back on the interchange, how did you feel while in that moment? Can you identify why your feelings were so strong? Looking back, what might have made a positive difference in the outcome?
 - Pride can play a part in our tendency to become offended when others have differing opinions on controversial topics. Why do you think that might be the case?
 - Read Philippians 2:1-11 aloud. In verses 2-4, Paul says to the Philippians: ...then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. [NIV] Picture a church that always behaved like this. What differences would you see if our church behaved like this? What would change in your life if this kind of behavior were present in all your relationships?
 - Particularly in this political climate, we often have a hard time conceding or even fully listening to another's point of view when involved in a disagreement about polarizing issues. When we consider the example we have in the life of Christ, that Jesus was willing to *die* for the sake of others, how should that influence what we are willing to do for the sake of peace and unity within the church?
- ✓ **Pray** Gracious God, we thank you for the example of humility in Christ Jesus. Open our eyes to see how we can emulate this in the way we talk with each other. We thank you for the gift of the church; please help us to protect that gift as we work toward unity. Amen.