

STUDY GUIDE: Our Great Exchange

Week #6 | CONFORMITY

January 20-26

This in-depth video-based study explores why our almighty God entrusts us to be managers of - and collaborators in - his restoration project.

NOTE: Contact Jeannie McCoy @ jeanniem@rbcpc.org for access to the weekly video segments..

INTRODUCTION

This weeks discussion dives into our calling to conformity and community. Most of us are fine with community, but we may struggle with a calling to conform. Aren't we supposed to *not be conformed* into the patterns of this world (Rom.12:2)? We also have a calling to conformed into Christ's likeness, and that changes everything, especially our communities.

WATCH VIDEO

CHAT (Only spend a few minutes here, really.)

- What topic inspires you more, individualism or conformity? Why is that?
- When you think of conformity to Christ as both an individual and a community, does that kill off individuality as the end product?
- Have any of you seen *religious-community-gone-wrong* where conformity was misunderstood?

READ & DISCUSS

Listen for our calling: Read Romans 8:28-29 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 (16-18 for context)

Romans 8:28 is pretty familiar, "we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God". The next verse we can miss the power of, Romans 8:29, says what God has called us *for*, called us *to do*, in a profound and simple statement: "For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son (NLT)", or "conformed to the image of his Son"(NIV). Paul says again in that 2 Corinthians passage that we are being transformed/conformed into Christ's image.

- Wait, first, do you think we all have the same image of Christ in mind?
- What has this conformity into Christ's likeness looked like in your life?
- What has been the most powerful practice you have followed for this transformation?
- Have you had seasons where your more (or way less) like Christ? What was going on that caused change?

Grafting:

The video spoke a lot of grafting branches into a strong root system. Have you ever grafted and grown a plant of any kind?

Interesting note on grafting for the green-thumbs amongst us:

“The normal process of grafting is to graft the good graft into an established root. The graft will grow into a tree and bear that same kind of fruit as the tree from which it was taken, and thereby the gardener increases the production of good fruit.

But God’s way of grafting is just the reverse. Paul says we are grafted into the olive tree (Christ) contrary to our nature. The goodness of the root infuses it’s life through the previously weak branch. Remaining attached to the root is then the key for the branch to live a life it would have never lived on it’s own.” - Jacob Beyers

Read Romans 11:17-18, you wild olive shoot, you.

Compare with Jesus’ words in John 15:5-11

What does it mean to “remain in Christ”?

From the video, “Conformity is about taking on the form that we were created to have (not a loss of uniqueness), but about becoming what we were fully meant to be in relationship with Christ”. You may have to read that twice. How’s it hit you?

We think about closeness to Christ as individuals, but what does it look like for a community to be conformed and moved together? Do any of us have the time for such a thing?

Remember last week where a community of people committed to live in and transform a neighborhood? Have you ever been a part of a community movement like this? Is your CORE called to anything communally?

APPLY

Christ extends his life to us, and then we are to extend that life to those around us.

A relationship with Jesus always means a relationship with those around us.

It is in the context of our relationships that we truly become conformed more and more to the likeness of Christ. Why? Because it’s usually our reactions to others that reveals Christ’s good fruit in you or, perhaps, your rotten berries.

This week try meditating on John 15:5-11. Think about what it means to remain in and to abide in Christ throughout the day, and wait for Christ to give you the heart for some one else. Not sure what your adventure will look like, but follow through with it. There is some certain fruit God is leading you, your family, and your community into. Listen.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

