

The Gathering Community Group Guide

The Helper // Part 8 // What the Church can learn from Oreos

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1 Corinthians 13

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. TAKE TIME BEFORE GROUP TO GO OVER THIS GUIDE.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

Halftime is a powerful tool that is used wisely by some coaches (and not so wisely by others)! The great coaches are able to take the time between the halves and use it to make adjustments or to refocus their teams on the game plan. When Paul was writing 1 Corinthians 13, he was being a wise coach who was helping the Corinthian church see God's game plan when it comes to the gifts: that love is to be more of a filling than a feeling. In the message, Paul showed us how Oreos are the perfect illustration for what the apostle Paul was writing in 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14:

1. **The wafers:** Chapters 12 and 14 of 1 Corinthians are a lot like the wafers of an Oreo cookie. They are a little messy, sometimes they can get cracked, and they require a good bit of chewing in order to get them down. On their own, they taste good, but something doesn't feel complete. At the beginning of chapter 13, Paul explains that the gifts without love are empty, too.
2. **The cream:** Chapter 13 is the cream in the middle of the crunch of chapters 12 and 14! Just like the cream in the middle of the Oreo, love is what holds all the gifts together and what fills the gaps that are so often created by seeking the gifts and developing the gifts. On its own, the cream is almost too mushy to do anything with, and love can be like that, too. Love isn't love without something (or someone) to love. Love needs substance.
3. **The lesson:** If we aren't careful, we will focus on the wafer or the cream instead of seeing the genius behind the Oreo: each ingredient is important, and the cream holds it all together. As we move forward in the gifts that the Helper gives us individually and as a church, we need to remember that love is what holds us together in perfect unity. We have different preferences (wafer vs. cream) and different opinions (it's a white and gold dress!!!), but if we allow love to be a filling more than a feeling, we'll always know we've chosen the most excellent way.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What, if any, is your takeaway from this week's message?
- Paul had 5 volunteers demonstrate how they eat Oreos. How do YOU eat an Oreo?
- 1 John 4:8 and 16 tell us that God is love. Discuss the dangers that can creep in when we reverse that truth and believe that "love is God." Which one does culture seem to believe? What evidence backs up your answer?
- Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Paul lists 14 actions of love – 6 things love does and 8 things love does not do. Notice that NONE OF THEM is a feeling. Which ones really resonate with you? Which of these is the hardest for you to choose to do consistently?
- As we grow in the understanding and operation of the gifts the Helper gives, what are the benefits and obstacles to filling gaps with love that we can expect as a church?
- Do you have any questions about anything we've studied to this point in The Helper series that you'd like us to try to answer? Turn them in to the Group leader and they'll get them to Paul.