



FLOURISH

## National Reflections

### February 11&12, 2017 - John Ortberg

*Note to Leaders: Throughout its 144-year history, Menlo Church has been committed to being a place where people of all political viewpoints feel welcome to come learn about Jesus and be in community together. This weekend's message continues to uphold that value by inviting us to reflect and pray together for our nation. Our hope is that the message and this study guide lead your group to an even deeper sense of confidence in God and a renewed sense of purpose to be part of what he is doing here in the Bay Area and throughout the world.*

## Connect

1. How did this weekend's message impact your thoughts or feelings about the current state of our nation?
2. Share a "crucible moment" that you have experienced in your life - a challenging moment that led you to greater clarity and resolve - and how you changed as a result.
3. Think about a time that you helped someone in need. What was the experience like and how did it help you to express (and experience!) God's love and compassion?

## Engage

1. Read Matthew 4:8-10
  - What is the nature of the offer that Satan is making to Jesus here?
  - Why would this offer have been a legitimate temptation for Jesus?
  - Upon what basis does Jesus reject Satan's offer?
2. Read 1 Timothy 2:1-2, Matthew 5:44-45
  - How are we to pray?
  - What specific direction is given when it comes to people with whom we do not agree or even dislike (i.e. enemies)?
3. Read Zechariah 7:9-10 (also Micah 6:8)
  - How are we instructed to behave toward all people?
  - Which specific groups are identified in the Zechariah passage and why (i.e. what do they have in common)?

## Apply

1. What does Jesus's response to Satan's offer (Matthew 4:8-10) teach us about how we can respond when facing the same temptation? How will this help us as we engage with family, friends and others during this complex political season?
2. Identify someone in the political realm whom you struggle to love or perhaps regard as an enemy. What is one step you can take this week to extend God's love to him/her?
3. Pray. Act. Love. What is one specific thing that your Life Group can do together over the next few weeks to respond to God's call to do these things?



# Pray

Pray together the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi:

Lord, make us an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let us sow love; Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith; Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light; Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love;

For it is in giving that we receive; It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

It is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

## Going Deeper

### Additional Questions

1. Regardless of your political views, several events in this current political season in the U.S. have been unprecedented. Using only 3 words, describe how you have experienced God's presence with you in your thoughts and feelings during this period.
2. "Love *listens*." How have you expressed love through listening through this current political season?
3. Menlo Church's values include Everybody's Welcome, Nobody's Perfect, and Anything's Possible. What is something you can personally do so that our church is a place where deep political conversations can happen within the context of those three values?
4. Jesus's original community had both a tax collector (collaborator with the Roman government) and a Zealot (activist against the Roman government). That little community changed the world and continues to do so 2000+ years later. Why?

### Learning Opportunity

Read *Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just* by Tim Keller for a biblically-based study on God's call to serve the marginalized

Read *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, & Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* by James Davidson Hunter for a challenging read on the role of Christians in the modern world

### Serving Opportunities

- **Ongoing opportunities** are always available at <http://menlo.church/serve-locally>. Some of Menlo Church's local partners include: Ravenswood Education Foundation, AbleWorks, Habitat for Humanity (Bay Area), LifeMoves, CityTeam, VA Hospital, Samaritan House, Hope's Corner.
- **March 11 - World Vision Refugee Kit Build**  
Menlo Park, San Mateo, Saratoga campuses - all are welcome  
Signups open February 15. Space is limited.
- **April 1 - Church-wide serving day**  
Opportunities throughout the Bay Area with our local mission partners.  
Signups open in March.

