

# One Anothering

Choosing each other in  
a politically divided world

8-Week Group Discussion Guide  
THE COLOSSIAN FORUM

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

DATE



# One Anothering<sup>™</sup>

Choosing each other  
in a politically divided world

OneAnothering.com  
ColossianForum.org

The Colossian Forum<sup>™</sup>  
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# God calls us to love one another.

## GROUP DISCUSSION GOAL

Participate in politics with a Kingdom posture that helps us to love one another, even as our differences remain.

Welcome to “One Anothering,” a journey toward a deeper love of God and one another. Through this group discussion guide, you’ll begin to discover that every conversation—even the challenging ones about politics—is an opportunity to grow in the fruit of the Spirit. This discussion guide is designed to help you cultivate a mindset and practices to engage these tough topics in a way that brings us closer to God and each other.

The term “one another” comes from the Greek word *allelon*, which appears 100 times in the New Testament. These verses, such as Jesus’ command in John 13: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another,” guide us in building relationships marked by Christ’s love.

Our deep hope is that by practicing “One Anothering,” you will be empowered to embody these Christlike qualities in your everyday interactions. Each chapter concludes with practical steps to apply what you’ve learned, encouraging you to live out your faith in real-world conversations.

We know this journey won’t be perfect. Yet, by rooting ourselves in Christ, we can confidently face political differences, trusting that even our imperfect efforts will point others toward the Kingdom of God.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This discussion guide is about loving one another more fully and deeply—through politics. We’ll do this by cultivating a posture (or way of being) that reflects Christ.

How do we cultivate a different way of being? In the first several sessions, we’ll examine our mindsets (or our ways of thinking) and practice habits to bring our thinking more fully into alignment with Christ. Then we’ll turn to more specific aspects of a Christlike posture and practice spiritual and interpersonal habits that invite the Holy Spirit in to form our hearts, minds, and actions.

Shifting our **posture** requires reforming both our **mindsets** and our **habits**.

**POSTURE:** Way of being

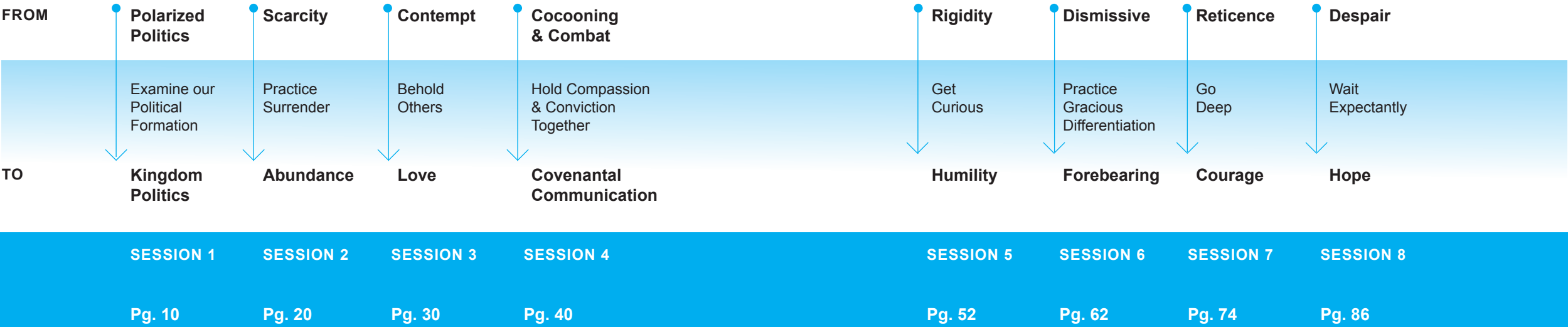
**MINDSET:** Way of thinking

**HABIT:** Way of interacting

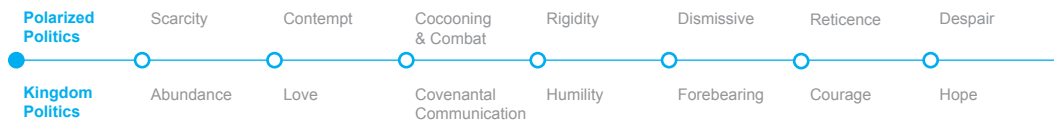
FACILITATING A GROUP?

Facilitators can find additional resources and videos at [OneAnothering.com](http://OneAnothering.com)

THE 8-WEEK SESSIONS:







# SESSION 1

## From Polarized Politics to Kingdom Politics

In this introductory session, we contrast polarized politics with Kingdom Politics and consider the ways that our early experiences have shaped our political postures, mindsets, and habits.

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The times suggested here assume your group is meeting for an hour. We highly suggest meeting for 90 minutes if possible. If you have more than 60 minutes, we suggest extending the time in the sections that your group connects with best. We imagine that the parts of this session marked with the + sign above may benefit from additional time, if possible. If your group has not met together previously, you will also need to set aside a bit more time for brief introductions in the first part of this session.

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## Introduction

6 minutes

If your group has not met together previously, we suggest briefly introducing yourselves at this point, providing basic information relevant to your group's context (for example, how long you have been at your church or why you joined the group). It is important to keep these introductions brief. The fourth part of this session will provide you with the chance to get to know one another more deeply.



### WELCOME

The video explains that this series will help us embody a Christ-like way of being in this political moment.

From Tanner Smith and Ashlee Eiland

[oneanothering.com/politicswelcome](https://oneanothering.com/politicswelcome) | 3:36

Some Christian traditions use Reign of God language and some use Kingdom language to refer to the same idea. We use Kingdom language because it is more common across Christian traditions. Groups who prefer Reign of God language can make substitutions throughout.

## Opening Prayer: Palms Down, Palms Up

5 minutes

**FACILITATOR** As we begin our time together each session, we will enter prayer. To start this session, we will engage in a prayer practice called Palms Down, Palms Up. The practice invites us to surrender to God and receive from God.

Let's begin by voicing together these words from Psalm 139:

**GROUP** **Search me, God, and know my heart;\*  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.  
See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.** (Psalm 139:23-24)

**FACILITATOR** Let's start by placing our palms down, in an emptying posture. Placing our palms down reflects our desire to turn over any concerns we may have to God. As we pray, surrender what we usually grasp and cling to.

Let's pray aloud, naming things that we wish to release as we begin our time together as a group. For example, "Lord, I surrender my anxiety about talking about politics." "I release my fear of silence to you."

Whatever weighs on our minds or hearts or is a concern, let's release it to God.

*Allow space for spoken or silent prayers*

*Palms Down, Palms Up* originally comes from Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*. This version was adapted by Ruth Haley Barton in *Invitation to Silence and Solitude*.

\* We use bold font throughout to indicate items that the group should say together.

**FACILITATOR** Now let's place our palms up, in a receiving posture. Placing our palms up is a symbol of our desire to receive from God.

Let's pray aloud, asking God to provide for us. For example, "Lord, give me peace about this conversation." "Lord, give us hope for how we might participate in politics." Whatever we need, let's ask God to provide it.

*Allow space for spoken or silent prayers*

Let's close by voicing together these words from Psalm 139:

**GROUP** **You have searched me, Lord,  
and you know me.** (Psalm 139:1)  
**Amen.**



From Polarized Politics to Kingdom Politics 20 minutes

Next, we will watch a video that introduces the central posture shift from polarized politics to Kingdom Politics that is at the heart of One Anothering. This video lays the foundation for the work you will be engaging in throughout this series, as each session will invite you to continue to shift your posture, mindsets, and habits.



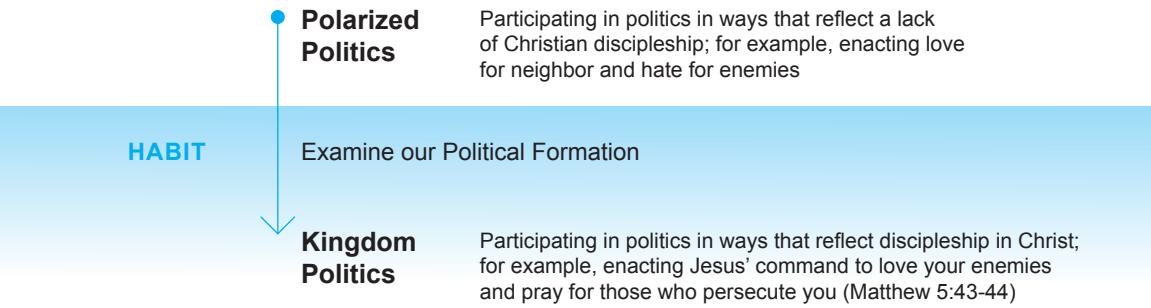
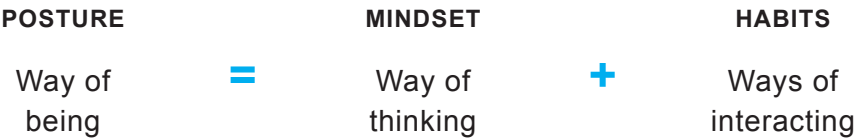
FROM POLARIZED POLITICS TO KINGDOM POLITICS  
From Ashlee Eiland  
[oneanothering.com/politics1](https://oneanothering.com/politics1) | 4:35

KEY IDEAS IN THE VIDEO

As Christians, we cannot simply cocoon, sheltering ourselves completely or even just avoiding conversations about politics. This small group series invites us to participate in politics with a Kingdom posture that helps us to love one another, even as our differences remain.

Dwelling in God’s Kingdom requires shifting our postures to align with God’s ways. Shifting our postures requires re-forming both our mindsets and our habits.

A Kingdom posture is made possible when we remain rooted in Christ, the true vine (John 12:1-8).



DISCUSSION

Process the video by discussing the following questions. We suggest that you first discuss in groups of 2 or 3 for about five minutes and then share thoughts with the whole group for about ten minutes.

1. What in the video struck me?
2. What habits help me remain rooted in Jesus, the true vine?  
What habits cut me off from the true vine?
3. Galatians 5:22 tells us that “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”
  - Which of these is most challenging in political conflict? What makes it hard?
  - Which is most helpful in political conflict? Why?



## Examine our Political Formation

*25 minutes*

In order to get acquainted and consider how our early experiences shaped our political postures, mindsets, and habits, we will introduce ourselves by sharing a memorable message from our childhoods that stands out related to politics. Memorable messages are ‘sticky’ messages that influenced our belief systems and behaviors.

We will take a few minutes of silence to consider what we each want to share with the group about this question:

1. Thinking back to my childhood, what memorable message stands out about politics?

Let’s share our memorable messages, starting with one person and then going around the circle, giving each person a chance to briefly share (in a sentence not a paragraph). Please resist the temptation to affirm, comment, or build on each other’s ideas in order to allow each person’s experience to be shared and received as equally relevant and valuable.

### DISCUSSION

After everyone has shared, discuss these questions:

1. What similarities and differences do we notice among our experiences?
2. Memorable messages both reflect and shape our postures, mindsets, and habits. For example, the memorable message that, “We have to do whatever it takes politically to get what is best for us,” may reflect a fearful posture, a scarcity mindset that believes that there is not enough to go around and may result in habits of engaging political differences in ways that are anxious.

What postures, mindsets, or habits do our memorable messages reflect or encourage?

3. How does examining these messages help us understand how our early life experiences shape our political postures, mindsets, and/or habits? Have they encouraged our participation in polarized politics or Kingdom politics—or perhaps a bit of both?

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## Closing Prayer

**Come, Holy Spirit, Come.  
Come as the wind, and cleanse.  
Come as the fire, and burn.  
Come as the water, and refresh.  
Convict; Convert; Consecrate  
Until we are wholly thine. Amen.**

(Adapted from Eric Milner-White)

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## Live it Out

2 minutes

Briefly review this invitation to live it out before next session.

### EXAMINING MY CONFLICT FORMATION

From an early age, we each learned—often through observation and experience—the value of conflict and how it should look and sound. In this exercise, you will reflect on those early lessons and how they have shaped your habits for engaging both conflict and political differences.

Reflect on the questions below in light of three childhood contexts:

- The family I grew up in
- An organization in which I participated (e.g., church or civic group)
- The region where I grew up

1. What did I learn from each context about how conflict should be engaged?

2. What did I learn from each context about how political differences should be engaged?

3. How have those lessons shaped my habits for responding to conflict and political differences?

4. Which habits do I wish to carry with me?  
Which habits do I wish to leave behind?