The Wheat and the Weeds  
Scripture: Matthew 13:24-30

Open ask someone in your group to pray for God to open our hearts to His Word and our ears to hear Him and that comments would be made to lead others to Christ. Pray for trusting and free dialogue.

Discuss any issues your group needs to address.

The Point  
Interpreting Together  
Don’t you wish the world came with labels—GOOD SEED...BAD SEED? It’d be so much easier if we get the wheat far from the weeds right away. But Jesus says that if we attempt to remove the weeds now, we endanger the wheat. So we are to “let both grow together” for now. The movie Together is a picture of that painful situation. Gary is a dad whose alcoholism has had a devastating influence on his family; but he’s trying to change things by keeping a promise and throwing a birthday party for his daughter. At the same time Gary’s putting up with his brother’s weed-like influence—he wants Gary to continue a “tradition” of giving alcohol for birth- days...this time for his niece, Gary’s daughter. So Gary endures temptation, but even worse, his daughter and brother let alcohol get the best of them, with unfortunate results. Being “together” means having to tolerate the bad influences now and trusting that God will sort it all out at a later time.

Cultural Background  
In Jesus’ day, “tares” were noxious little weeds also known as “darnel.” The seed looked similar to the wheat seed, so it often got mixed with the wheat accidentally. It also appears that immature darnel sprouts looked a lot like wheat as well, making it hard to weed the crop in the early stages. This meant waiting until the crop matured to do the weeding.

Discussion Questions  
1. How do we tell the “wheat” from the “tares” today?  
2. Who’s been a negative influence in you life? Positive?  
3. How, according to Jesus, are we to act toward those whom we perceive as “tares” in our lives?  
4. Why does God allow this world to be filled with such a mixed bag of wheat and weeds?

Background  
It’s tempting to want to weed the world of “tares.” The problem is that it’s hard to distinguish between them and the good stuff. This means we must leave justice (weeding) to God. We must trust that he’ll take the evil ones away one day so that we can drop the sickle today. Our job is to try and be good soil for the seed right now (as Jesus illustrated in the parable of the sower). Therefore we shouldn’t be surprised by the presence of “hypocrites” in the church; there is a real enemy who comes in the middle of the night and sows bad seed.

Discussion Questions  
Read Matthew 13:24-30

1. How has the church throughout history failed to heed Jesus’ teaching with respect to the wheat and the weeds?  
2. Does this mean that we’re not supposed to discern bad behavior now?
3. What kind of damage do you see the tares doing in the “field of America” today? How about in your life’s field?

4. Why is it so hard for us to wait for the “harvest”?

*Read Galatians 6:1-10*

5. How do verses 1 and 2 illustrate ways of helping someone “keep in step with the Spirit” (v 5:24)?

6. How does verse 5 relate to verse 2?

**Praying For and With Each Other**

*Use this prayer and add your own petitions:*

Father, I ask for myself and (name one or more)...

There are so many decisions that we must make over a lifetime, and we’re not adequate to make them on our own. Help us live lives certain of Your wisdom, as we accept Your Word and keep it in our hearts. *(Proverbs 2:1-6)*

May we trust in You and know You as our only hope, for then You will show us Your ways, guide us in Your truth and teach us Your paths. May we turn to and rely on the faithfulness of our Lord Jesus, in Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge – He is the very wisdom of God. *(Psalm 25:1-5; Colossians 2:3; 1 Corinthians 1:4)*

Help us to confess our sins; then You will instruct us and teach us the way we should go, counseling and watching over us. May we pay attention to Your commands, for as we do You teach us what is best and give us Your direction. *(Psalm 32:5, 8; Isaiah 48:18, 17)*

Help us to be mature and complete, neither double-minded not unstable – asking for wisdom without doubt. *(James 1:4-6)*

May we live centered in Your will and wisdom. In Jesus’ name – amen, so be it!