

WHEELERSBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Life Application Sunday School Class

One Another - Session 2

November 23, 2003

We are studying and applying several of the "one another" commandments in the New Testament. First, let's have a brief review of last week:

I. Christianity is all about relationship.

First and foundational is our relationship to God. But Biblical Christianity is not limited to our reconciliation to God, but also includes our relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ, for they are His children also.

II. Christianity is about our corporate mission

In addition, God saves us for a reason. That reason includes our mission, of knowing Him and making Him known. This mission is a team effort, which means that our relationship and fellowship with others is critical to the mission and fulfillment of the purpose of our salvation. God desires for His glory to be expressed in the earth, and that expression is most glorious and fully expressed through the whole community of believers, not just individuals. This is why the life of the New Testament church is just that – the life of the church, not just individuals.

III. Biblical fellowship is the sharing of this mission

Biblical fellowship is a sharing together of everything; tangible things such as material provision as well as emotional and spiritual support. It is intended to be a close relationship with others that have the same love, passion, and goal of knowing Christ and making Him known to others.

Fellowship is not as much a social agenda and activity as a mission agenda and activity. God has set leadership gifts in the body of Christ to equip us to do our mission.

IV. Practical things we need to do to start to experience fellowship:

1. We will need to spend time with one another.
2. We will have to get to know one another.
3. We must begin to care for one another in a deeper way.

That brings us to where we left off last week. Now, before we jump into today's lesson, I would like us to think of some actions we can take NOW to implement what we are learning.

1. Make a prayer list of others, and pray regularly for them and their spiritual growth.
2. Schedule a time to get together with someone that you don't know well.
3. Look for needs within the local church, and meet them.
4. Consider calling with a word of encouragement, or writing a note of encouragement this week to someone

that may seem to need that, or someone that has been a blessing in your life.

Today we come to the first "one another" command we are going to consider in this series. Turn to Romans 12:4-5

4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

God has designed the many members of the body of Christ to function as one. Let's consider the power that comes with that design. What are some everyday examples that display the power of unity? Sports teams; symphony orchestra; moving someone into a new house.

These examples demonstrate, that even in the natural realm, there is synergy in a unified effort that cannot be realized by working alone. God's goal and design for the church is to function as a unit, every part supplying its part.

READ John 17:20-23

20 "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; 21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; 23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

Answer these questions:

1. Who is Jesus praying for?

He is praying for all believers.

2. What does He pray for and why?

He prays that they may be one, so that the world may know that the Father has sent Christ. It

is Christ's work within us corporately, not just individually, that displays the glory of God.

Notice again that our oneness and fellowship with one another is attached to our mission.

3. What brings about this oneness?

It is the revelation of the Father to our hearts, the revelation of His glory, which is His Son. This is the true gospel. Belief of the truth is what produces oneness.

4. What is displayed to the world as we walk in unity? Our oneness displays the love that God has for us to the world. When we walk in oneness of purpose and love and care for one another, the love of God is put on display for all to see.

READ Acts 4:23-32

²³ When they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is You who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them, ²⁵ who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, And the peoples devise futile things? ²⁶ 'The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered

together Against the Lord and against His Christ.'²⁷ "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.²⁹ "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence,³⁰ while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus."³¹ And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.³² And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them.

This passage is a demonstration by the early church of the power displayed when the church is functioning as one. Notice again that this unity was centered in purpose and mission, and the benefits is that everyone was taken care of. Are we called to have this type of oneness today? READ I Corinthians 1:10, and discuss the meaning of this verse:

10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

This is a commandment – for us to have the same mind and same judgment in everything – no divisions. Is this possible? I would say yes, because it is commanded.

Now let's look at some dynamic metaphors that demonstrate this principle of oneness and diversity.

READ I Cor 3:5-8

5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. ⁷ So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. ⁸ Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

Agriculture: Many plants, one field. Shows us a individuals, but together and one.

READ I Cor 3:9-11

9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. ¹⁰ According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. ¹¹ For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Architectural: Many stones, one building

READ I Peter 2:4-5

⁴ And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

This metaphor speaks of how we must be fitted together (a growing process), and our foundation and direction must by Christ and the apostolic teaching (Word of God). Note that spiritual growth is a corporate process and is integrated with our relationship with one another. The goal and finished product is not individual, but corporate.

C. Others analogies – automobiles and clocks; many parts, but one functioning unit

D. READ I Cor 12:14-27

14 For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵ If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. ¹⁹ If they were all one member, where would the body be? ²⁰ But now there are many members, but one body. ²¹ And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; ²³ and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, ²⁴ whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, ²⁵ so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷ Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

This is probably the most extensive passage in the NT concerning this principle. What are some learnings we can gain from this analogy concerning our relationships in the body of Christ?

1. Vs 12-14 teach ONE body; MANY parts.
This is speaking of the local church. Though we are many different people, from different backgrounds, different likes and dislikes, look different, and in this context, have different gifts and abilities given to us, God has made us one.
2. No matter what the individual part is, it belongs to the body.
Regardless of what part we are in the body, or what gifts we have, or what function we perform, we are as much a part of the body and as necessary as any other part. Each member's role and ministry is just as necessary as another's.
3. God has defined each part by the gifts and functions provided.
We are what we are by God's grace. We need to be content with the gifts and calling God has given us. We should accept each other as a valuable member of the body, essential to the completeness of the body.
4. Diversity is necessary for the body to function.
We can't all be the same part. We should not expect everyone to have the same gifts and abilities. Not all are gifted to speak or have a "visible" role in ministry. The quieter gifts and functions are just as needful and valuable for the functioning of the church. In fact, to try to make a part do what God has not gifted it, is to cripple the body.
5. Each part needs the other parts.
Because we view a part as "weaker" does not mean it is not needed. In fact, the body needs to give more attention and care to the "weaker" parts.
6. If one part suffers, all suffer with it; If one part is honored, all are honored with it.
God has designed the local church this way so that He receives the attention and glory. No one part is to receive the glory, but the glory is the Lord's.
7. The proper function of the body occurs as we walk in love toward one another.
I Cor 13 teaches that the way for our gifts to function the way God intended is to walk in love.
8. Interdependence is the goal
We are not to be dependent (babies), independent (teens), but interdependent (mature). This means we each contribute our part to the whole, and recognize our need of others as well.

So in conclusion, what affect should this principle of being members one of another have in our day-to-day lives? Apply this principle in a practical way:

1. How should we respond to the continued absence of fellow church member from services?
2. How much time should we spend with other members of the local church?
3. What are you going to do this week to implement this principle?