

“We Belong to One Another”
April 10, 2016

Romans 12:1-5 NIV

CORE: (2016 Theme: “What does it mean to be the CHURCH?” To Jesus. To one another. To the world.) **There IS one Body with many members. [UNITY & DIVERSITY] And “each member belongs to all the others.”**

KEY CONVICTIONS (that make relationships work):

1. RELATIONSHIPS MATTER TO GOD

- Pharisees had 613 (and counting) laws—endless debates; **COMPETING**
- Jesus summed the Law/Prophets in 2 commands—“The 2nd is like the 1st”; about **COMPLETING**
- Bob Jones by Heaven’s throne. One question: “*Did you learn to love?*”

2. WE NEED ONE ANOTHER

- No “part” can exist disconnected from the “Body”
- “**One another**” is actually *one word* meaning- “**mutual; reciprocal**”
- **3 Basic Ways to Respond to One Another:**
 - **CLING**- Sees people as ultimate **SOURCE**
 - **CLOSED**- Sees self as ultimate **SOURCE**
 - **CONNECT**- God is my ultimate **SOURCE**—people are a **RESOURCE**
- **God’s Perspective:**
 - **CLINGING is unhealthy DEPENDENCE** (*i.e., Codependency*)
 - Jeremiah 5:31: “The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority, and My people love it this way.” Why do they “*love it this way*?” Some people like others to **think** for them!
 - “The fear of man is a *snare*.” (Proverbs 29:25). “Snare”- a *fowler’s trap that catches a bird by the feet, keeping it from flying*. We will never **SOAR** if we have to continually seek unanimous approval because we over-value their opinion.
 - Being **CLOSED** is unhealthy **INDEPENDENCE**
 - “Don’t reject the importance of **assembling yourself** with (connecting with) others” (Hebrews 10:25)
 - “Don’t think of yourself more highly than you ought (to think)” (Romans 12:3)
 - “For none of us lives for ourselves alone.” (Romans 14:17)
 - Being **CONNECTED** is living with “sound judgment” (Lit.- “sane”)
 - Romans 12:5 AMP- “mutually dependent” (all have something to offer)!

3. “Belonging to one another” REQUIRES FAITH

- “Think of yourself...with the measure of faith God has given (*all of*) you!” (Romans 12:3)
 - Faith that YOU have something to offer!
 - Faith that OTHERS do, too!
- “You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you cannot do. Together we can do great things!” -Mother Teresa

4. ARGUMENTS that are ENDLESS lead to a LIFE that is FRIENDLESS

- Joseph Garlington- “Do you want to be right or be reconciled?”
 - “Foolish (inane, stupid) arguments only produce *strife*.” (2 Timothy 2:23) “Contention”- (unwilling to give up the right to always be “right”) An endless battle of *wills*!
- “Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.” (Romans 14:1 NIV) NOTE: They were arguing over eating meat that had been used in idol worship.
 - NOTE: Paul doesn’t say who is right or wrong—Instead...
 - He calls them to accept one another—even when they disagree
- Major on the “majors”:
 - Ephesians 4- The “unity of the Spirit” has 7 major convictions:
 - There is “one BODY”, “One Spirit” (i.e., Holy Spirit), “One hope”, “One Lord” (i.e., Jesus), “One faith”, “One baptism”, and “One God and Father of all”
- There will always be “minor” (i.e., “disputable”) matters
 - Centerville, GA (town of under 5,000 people) has 48 Presbyterian churches (*Divided over flowers in church; placement of piano bench; issue of checking email on Sunday, attire, KJV only, etc.*)
 - Man found on deserted island with 3 huts. One was his house. The other was his church. The third, the church he used to go to.

NOTE: We grow closer or we grow apart—depending on what’s growing inside us (i.e., bitterness/resentment/impatience—OR—love that is maturing & enduring)

Colossians 3:10-14 TPT- For your new creation life is continually being renewed into the likeness of the One who created you; giving you the full revelation of God. In this new creation life, your nationality makes no difference, or your ethnicity, education, or economic status—they matter nothing. For it is Christ that means everything as he lives in every one of us!

You are always dearly loved by God! So put on the garment of the virtues of God, since you have been divinely chosen to be holy. **Be merciful** as you endeavor to understand others, and **be compassionate**, showing kindness toward all. **Be gentle** and **humble, unoffendable** in your patience with others. **Tolerate** the weaknesses of those in the family of faith, **forgiving** one another in the same way you have been graciously forgiven by Jesus Christ. If you find fault with someone, release this same gift of forgiveness to them. For love is supreme and must flow through each of these virtues. **Love becomes the mark of true maturity.**