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“One Another” Body Life

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“One Another” Body Life

One thing that is true about the body of Christ is that we need one another!

Jesus said, “I give you a new commandment—to love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. Everyone will know by this that you are my disciples—if you have love for one another.”—John 13:34-35

Loving one another involves accepting, instructing, serving, bearing with, submitting to, and encouraging each other. We need each other to help us grow in our relationship with God. We need each other for encouragement. But ... we have a hard time getting along, let alone needing each other! God knows all about the difficulty we have at times with other people! We are tempted to gossip, judge, get angry, and accuse one another. We get annoyed. We get irritated. We get hurt. And yet, our heavenly Father truly desires for us to love one another ... and to model His love to the world. Here is what Jesus told His disciples in one of His last conversations with them: “I give you a new commandment—to love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. Everyone will know by this that you are my disciples—if you have love for one another.” —John 13:34-35

Love is the key to good relationships in the family of God ... but how do we get there? God gives us the answer in Paul’s letter to Timothy: “For God did not give us a Spirit of fear but of power and love and self-control.” —2 Timothy 1:7

Q. Look closely at this verse. Where does love come from?

Paul told the Corinthians what Christ’s love looks like when we are controlled by the Holy Spirit: “Love is patient, love is kind, it is not envious. Love does not brag, it is not puffed up. It is not rude, it is not self-serving, it is not easily angered or resentful. It is not glad about injustice, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” —1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Q. Which aspect of love described in this passage is already a part of your life?

Q. As you look at these verses, which characteristic of love are you lacking?

The Corinthian church in the New Testament was full of “baby” Christians. They had accepted Christ’s love for them, but they treated one another selfishly, which resulted in quarreling and jealousy (see 1 Corinthians 3:1-4). They needed to learn

how to love one another! Love is the key to good relationships in the family of God.

“One another” is mentioned more than thirty times in the Bible! God intends that we love each other, and the many facets of love are expressed in these “one another” commands. Loving “one another” involves several key actions: devotion, accepting, instructing, serving, bearing with, submitting to, and encouraging. When we are able to do these things, then we truly will be able to show the world that as Christians we love one another. This love is not an emotional here today gone tomorrow kind of love. It is a tough, strong, knowledgeable, and lasting commitment kind of love.

Devoted to One Another

“Be devoted to one another with mutual love, showing eagerness in honoring one another.” —Romans 12:10

When we are devoted, we are loyal, faithful, and dedicated. As God’s family we show concern for one another and are loyal to each other. Because we are the family of God, we need to love each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Q. What kinds of actions do you think show that you are devoted to others?

Accept one Another

“Receive one another, then, just as Christ also received you, to God’s glory.” —Romans 15:7

Romans 14:13 says, “Therefore we must not pass judgment on one another, but rather determine never to place an obstacle or a trap before a brother or sister.”

To accept one another is to receive each other willingly or to give admittance to or approval of someone. Because of the sacrifice Jesus made for each one of us, we need to accept one another as the unique individuals that God has created.

Q. What reasons do you have for not accepting others?

Instruct One Another

“But I myself am fully convinced about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another.” —Romans 15:14

Oh, how we don't like to have someone telling us what to do! Instruction implies teaching and learning ... and having someone tells us what to do!

Q. How are you at taking instruction? Are you gracious when you give it?

Q. Why is this mandate to instruct one another difficult within the body of Christ?

Q. How can you cultivate an open heart to the instruction from others?

Serve One Another

Galatians 5:13 says, "Serve one another humbly in love" (NIV). As a member of God's family, with all its rights and privileges, every Christian is to be a servant to all the other members of the family. The needs of all those in the family are then met! Proud people use others; humble people are able to serve others.

Q. Is there a way you can serve someone this week?

Q. What happens to you when you serve someone?

Bearing with One Another

"Bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if someone happens to have a complaint against anyone else. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also forgive others." —Colossians 3:13

What does it mean to when Paul says, "bearing with one another"? If we look at this same phrase in a couple of different Bible translations, we'll get a very clear answer! The NLT says, "Make allowance for each other's faults" and the CEV puts it this way, "Put up with each other."

"To bear" means to patiently endure the idiosyncrasies and weaknesses of others! It means we have a forgiving spirit. Patience and a forgiving spirit are nearly synonymous concepts. These are not automatic; they involve a deliberate act of the will. When you are impatient, angry, and unforgiving, you are choosing to be that way! It is only through the Holy Spirit's supernatural power that we are able to bear with each other! It is only by the Holy Spirit's power that you will be able to take on all of these "one another" admonitions! You can't generate this kind of behavior on your own.

Q. What are some of the quirks and habits of others that irritate you?

Q. What are some of your idiosyncrasies that clearly test the patience of others?

Q. What one thing can you do today to take a step toward doing a better job of bearing with others?

Submit to One Another

“Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.” —Ephesians 5:21

Submission is a very important yet often ignored Biblical teaching. The Bible is very clear that all Christians are to submit to one other. All Christians are to submit to their leaders, and servants are to submit to masters. Children are to submit to parents, and Christians are to submit to government and authority, and husbands and wives are to submit to each other.

This is amazing because in the world there is no such thing as mutual submission! It is uniquely Christian. Christ brought a whole new approach to functional relationships between people. Submission has to do with servanthood, humility, respect, reverence, honor, and willingness to be teachable. All of this is rooted in our individual submission and obedience to Christ.

Q. In what ways are you learning to submit to God?

Q. Who are you currently submitting to?

Q. What about this concept of submission is difficult for you?

Q. What is keeping you from obeying God in this area?

Encourage One Another

1 Thessalonians 5:11 tells us, “Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, just as you are in fact doing.”

One of the ways we can encourage one another is by sharing scripture. We can also find many ways to build each other up. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says, “Two people are better than one, because they can reap more benefit from their labor. For if they fall, one will help his companion up, but pity the person who falls down and has no one to help him up.”

Q. Who in your life needs to be encouraged?

Q. How can you encourage that person?

Q. What can you do to make encouragement more of an everyday action in your life?

It is only by the Holy Spirit's power that you will be able to take on all of these "one another" admonitions! You can't generate this kind of behavior on your own. God's love and the actions that come out of it are only the result of the Holy Spirit working in and through you.

Application

Q. Which one of the "one another" directives is easiest for you?

Q. Which one of the directives is most difficult?

Ask God to show you how you can be a more Spirit-filled member of His family.