

Topics in Practical Theology – Lesson 6 – Body Life

Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School

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Discussion Question:

1. What is your decision making process when prioritizing your life activities?
2. Is there anything that takes priority over your active involvement at VBC?

Review:

1. Overview and Spirit-filled life: A walk in the Spirit is a moment by moment decision to recognize, repent, and confess sin; to yield our will to God's word; and to allow the word to richly dwell in us.
2. Spiritual Warfare: The believer is in a war – a war for our minds. We are being attacked by the devil, his world system, and the flesh. Yet, God has given us everything we need to be victorious in the battle: the word and the indwelling Holy Spirit.
3. Worship: Worship is a continual action of ascribing worth to God as we meditate on His majesty, placing the worship of Him before everything, and worshipping Him with our entire being with correct understanding from and in a manner consistent with His word.
4. God's Will and Decision Making: The decision making process is 1) obedience to God's word in moral decisions, 2) freedom to make spiritually expedient non-moral decisions with the responsibility to use wisdom, and 3) humble submission to God's sovereign.
5. Spiritual Gifts: Every believer has been given at least one spiritual gift. These gifts are different from talents. Spiritual gifts are given for the purpose of building the body of Christ as they are used to serve other believers within the body.

Body Life

The Church

“Church” translates the Greek *ekklesia* meaning “a called out group”. This called out group is not people who simply profess to know Jesus not those who identify themselves with a particular Christian group.

²¹“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. ²²“Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ ²³“And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’ Matt 7:21-23

¹⁴I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; ¹⁵but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth. 1 Tim 3-15

The church is the total group of individuals who place their faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. When born again, these individuals are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body.

¹²For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Cor 12:12-13

²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Gal 3:26-28

The church is a New Testament revelation of an Old Testament mystery.

⁴By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; ⁶*to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, Eph 3:4-6

The church is what Jesus promised to build and what began at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

¹⁸“I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. Matt 16:18

The head of the church is Jesus.

¹⁸He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. Col 1:18

¹⁹and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. Col 2:19

Purpose of the Church is:

1) To glorify God,

²¹to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. Eph 3:21

2) to spread the Gospel,

¹⁹“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matt 28:19-20

and 3) to build itself up in the faith through teaching, fellowship (sharing), remembering the Lord’s sacrifice, and prayer.

¹¹And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. Eph 4:11-16

⁴²They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42

The “Body”

The church is an organized organism. Several figures picture the church: a bride (Eph 5:25-32), a building (1 Pet 2:4-5), branches (John 15:1-11), and a body.

The rich doctrine of the church as Christ’s Body is a metaphor that shows the church not as an organization but as a living organism made up of many interrelated and mutually dependent parts. Christ is the head of that Body, and the Holy Spirit is, as it were, its lifeblood. . . . Members of the Body of Christ are inextricably united in their Lord, and when one member malfunctions, the whole Body is weakened. When its members disobey the Head, the Body limps and stumbles. Yet when its members faithfully respond to the Head, the church manifests the Lord’s beauty, power, and glory. MacArthur’s New Testament Commentary: Ephesians

The body figure illustrates the diverse-unity and interdependence that is present in the church. The body is made up of unique individuals who are united by the indwelling Holy Spirit. The many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.

⁴For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Rom 12:4-5

¹²For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵If 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. ¹⁶And 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. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. ¹⁹If they were all one member, where would the body be? ²⁰But now there are many members, but one body. ²¹And 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.” ²²On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; ²³and 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, ²⁴whereas 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, ²⁵so that there may be no division in the body, but *that* the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it. 1 Cor 12:12-27

Being a member of Christ’s body comes with responsibilities toward the head and the other members. Our motivation for striving to excel at relationships in our life is the incredible mercy and grace we have been shown. We once walked in the those things for which the wrath of God will come. We have been chosen by God, separated from sin, and beloved by Him. Therefore, we should put on those qualities that build unity in the body.

⁵Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. ⁶For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, ¹⁰and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— ¹¹*a renewal* in which there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. ¹²So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. ¹⁴Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Col 3:5-15

Believer to Believer Relationships

¹Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! Psa 133:1

- Love one another

¹²“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. John 15:12

¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. 1 John 4:11-12

Love is the sacrificial commitment of my will to another's needs and best interests regardless of the cost to myself. Love seeks another's highest good, even if it costs a great deal; even if there is no response of love or gratitude. Love is not an impulse from the feelings. It does not always run with the natural inclinations nor does it spend itself only upon those whom we like or deem worthy to receive love. It is an act of the will, so we can choose to love even if we do not feel like doing it.

¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16

⁴Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, ⁵does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, ⁶does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Cor 13:4-7

Love is significant in the life of the body in that it demonstrates tangibly that we belong to Jesus and is foundational in relationships.

³⁴“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34-35

⁸Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. 1 Pet 4:8

- Forgive one another

³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Eph 4:31-32

¹²So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Col 3:12-13

²¹Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” ²²Jesus said* to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. Matt 18:21-22

Forgiveness is the gracious human act of not holding wrong acts against a person. Forgiveness is that act and attitude toward those who have wronged us which restores relationships and fellowship.

Forgiveness reflects the highest human virtue, because it so clearly reflects the character of God. A person who forgives is a person who emulates godly character. Nothing so much demonstrates God's love as His forgiveness. A person who does not forgive is therefore a person lacking in godly character and without Christ-like love, no matter how orthodox his theology or how outwardly impeccable his morals appear to be. A Christian who will not relinquish a hateful, resentful attitude toward someone who has wronged him is a person who knows neither the true glory of his redeemed humanity nor the true glory of God's gracious divinity. An unforgiving Christian is a living contradiction of His new nature in Christ. It is central to the heart of God to forgive, and only the Christian who radiates forgiveness radiates true godliness.

Considering forgiveness from another direction, Christians need to forgive because they themselves need forgiveness. They are spiritual children and, like all children, are ignorant, weak, selfish, disobedient, and regularly in need of forgiveness, both from God and from each other. Forgiving is a give-and-take issue of life.

Forgiveness is therefore the key to spiritual unity in the church, because it is the key to love and the key to all meaningful relationships. Only forgiveness can break down the barriers that sin continually and inevitably erects between people, including God's people. "A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a transgression" (Prov. 19:11). Christians are at their best when they are forgiving. Because they themselves have been forgiven so much by God, they, of all people, should be most forgiving of others, especially of fellow believers. Christians are most like their Lord when they forgive "each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven" them (Eph. 4:32). Paul declared the same truth to the Colossians, telling them to bear with one another and forgive one another, "just as the Lord forgave you" (Col. 3:13). Because they have been forgiven every sin by Christ, believers should be willing and eager to forgive each other in everything.

MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: Matthew 16-23

- Build up one another
 - ¹⁹So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. Rom 14:19
- Give preference to one another
 - ³Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Phil 2:3-4
 - ²¹and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Eph 5:21
 - ¹⁰give preference to one another in honor; Rom 12:10b
- Encourage one another
 - ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing. 1 Thess 5:11
 - ¹³But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Heb 3:13
 - ²³Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; ²⁴and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. Heb 10:23-25
- Admonish one another
 - ¹⁴And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another. Rom 15:14
- Edify one another
 - ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing. 1 Thess 5:11
 - ²⁹Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need of *the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Eph 4:29

- Serve one another
 - ¹³For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. Gal 5:13
 - ¹⁰As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 1 Pet 4:10
- Accept one another
 - ⁵Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, ⁶so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. Rom 15:5-7
- Be devoted to one another
 - ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; Rom 12:10a
- Be affectionate to one another
 - ¹⁴Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ. 1 Pet 5:14
- Be hospitable to one another
 - ⁹Be hospitable to one another without complaint. 1 Pet 4:9
- Confess sins to and pray for one another
 - ¹⁶Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. James 5:16
- Bear one another's burdens
 - ²Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. Gal 6:2
- Comfort one another
 - ¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words. 1 Thess 4:18
- Live harmoniously with one another
 - ¹⁵Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, Rom 15:15
 - ¹³and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. 1 Thess 5:13
- Show tolerance for one another
 - ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, Eph 4:2
- Be kind to one another
 - ³²Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Eph 4:32

Church Member to Elder Relationships

- What are elders?
 - Those who are set apart and qualified by the Holy Spirit for prayer and the ministry of the Word. (Acts 6:4; 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9)
 - They are the caretakers of the church. (1 Tim 3:5)
 - They rule and exercise oversight. (1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 5:17; 1 Pet 5:2)
 - They shepherd the flock of God. (Acts 20:28)
 - To feed (1 Tim 3:2)
 - To lead (Heb 13:7; 1 Pet 5:2)
 - To protect and watch over (Heb 13:17)
 - To care for (1 Thess 2:7)
 - They preach and teach the Word. (1 Tim 5:17)

- What is my responsibility to them?
 - Appreciate and highly esteem
 - ¹²But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, ¹³and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. 1 Thess 5:12-13

 - Obey and submit
 - ¹⁷Obey your leaders and submit *to them*, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. Heb 13:17

Summary

- The people at Valley Bible Church are members of my family. I have responsibilities toward my physical family; I also have responsibilities toward my church family.
- I am responsible to love; to , in humility, regard one another as more important than myself; to forgive and seek forgiveness; to encourage; to serve; to accept; to be hospitable toward; to be devoted to; to admonish; to confess my sins to; to pray for; and to have a fond affection for and unity with.
- I am also responsible to honor my church leaders and obey and submit to them.